

STARS AND STRIPES®

**Savannah State
ends imperfect
season at 0-28**

Page 30



**Top-level Iraq
rebels eluding
military's grasp**

Page 6



**Will Scorsese
end his Oscar
drought?**

Page 18

Director Martin Scorsese

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2005

States seeking ways to reward guardsmen

Free tuition, bonuses, tax breaks await some returning from Iraq

Page 7



Special to Stars and Stripes

Dr. (Lt. Col.) Phillip Ritchey, 69, right, was asked by the Army to come back to active duty for a tour in Baghdad. Ritchey, an ophthalmologist who graduated from West Point in 1957 and served a year in Vietnam, accepted the invitation. Both the Army and Marine Corps are seeking retirees who are willing to return to service to fill positions stressed by Iraq rotations.

Marines, Army go old school

Services turn
to retired troops
to fill critical
vacancies

Page 4

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ews Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Abduction of senator's wife: One of two men charged with abducting the wife of U.S. Sen. Judd Gregg from her home in 2003 admitted his role and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Christopher Forbes, 33, who has no fixed address, pleaded guilty to robbery and abduction Monday in Fairfax County Circuit Court.

His sentence was part of a plea agreement.

Forbes and another man abducted Kathleen Gregg from her home in McLean, Va., on Oct. 7, 2003. Neither Kathleen Gregg nor her husband, the senior Republican senator from New Hampshire, attended Monday's hearing.

Forbes' alleged accomplice, Michael Pierre, 26, of Upper Marlboro, Md., is expected to plead guilty to the same charges next week, Julie Mitchell, an assistant commonwealth's attorney, told The Washington Post.

Renewing wedding vows: Thousands of couples joined Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee and first lady Janet Huckabee in renewing their wedding vows at a Valentine's Day ceremony supporting the state's voluntary covenant-marriage law that makes divorce harder to obtain.

"There is a crisis in America," the Republican governor told a crowd of 6,400 at an arena Monday night. "That crisis is divorce. It is easier to get out of a marriage than to get out of a contract to buy a used car."

Before the Huckabees renewed their wedding vows, they signed legal papers converting their 30-year marriage to a covenant marriage. Organizers of the event did not ask other couples to convert their marriages.

Gum photo in yearbook: A federal judge has refused to delay publication of a high school yearbook while a student fights to include a photo showing him posing with a shotgun.

Londonderry (N.H.) High School officials told Blake Douglass he couldn't use the photo as his senior portrait, but offered to publish it in a specially created "community sports" section so he could show his interest in trapezology.

Douglass rejected the offer and sued, arguing that for 20 years the yearbook has included photos of students "posing with weapons or simulated weapons, making offensive gestures [and] referencing the use of alcohol by minors." He claimed the school was discriminating against him based on his hobby, violating his freedom of expression.

Deadly immigrant smuggling case: A federal appeals court overturned a judge's order that two juries should decide the fate of a truck driver accused in the deaths of 19 illegal immigrants.

The three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Houston also directed prosecutors' request to remove the judge presiding over the trial of Tyrone Williams, of Schenectady, New York.

Williams, who is black, is seeking an opinion from the U.S. Supreme Court on whether his race was a factor in federal prosecutors' decision to seek the death penalty against him. He is the only one of 14 defendants in the case facing capital punishment.

Alutian freighter cleanup: Freight and cleanup operations of a shipwreck that wrecked in the Aleutian Islands, off the Alaskan coast, have been shut down until spring, the Coast Guard said Monday.

Salvage crews since January removed from the remains of the Selendang Ayu, including 127,784 gallons of intermediate fuel



Flooding disaster: A woman and her daughter arrive at La Guaira airport after being rescued from a beach in Venezuela on Thursday. Troops in helicopters shuttled food, water and medical supplies to remote towns where dozens of people were missing after devastating floods and landslides that have killed at least 86 people in Venezuela and Colombia.

oil and 11,523 gallons of diesel, or about 30 percent of the fuel the freighter was carrying, Coast Guard Adm. James Olson said.

The rest — more than 321,000 gallons of fuel oil and an unknown amount of diesel — is presumed lost in the Bering Sea.

Newspaper sues governor: A federal judge ruled that Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich can freeze out two reporters from The (Baltimore) Sun by barring all state employees from talking to the journalists.

U.S. District Judge William Quarles on Monday dismissed the newspaper's lawsuit, saying the paper wrongly asserted a greater right to access to government officials than private citizens have.

"The right to publish news is expansive. However, the right does not carry with it the unrestrained right to gather information," the judge ruled.

HealthSouth, Medicare debacle: HealthSouth Corp. booked singers like Faith Hill, Reba McEntire and the band Alabama for its annual management meetings at Walt Disney World between 1996 and 2001 — then billed Medicare to cover the cost, according to a report in The Birmingham News.

HealthSouth had previously acknowledged improperly billing Medicare for lavish entertainment and other expenses as part of a \$325 million settlement announced by the Justice Department in December, but the agreement did not mention who performed at the meetings.

World

Philippine fighting: The president vowed Tuesday to forge ahead with a major military offensive against Muslim militants in the southern Philippines that is believed to have prompted deadly bombings in three cities.

"The desperation of the enemy cannot be underestimated, even as it lies in the throes of defeat," President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said in a statement. "More than ever, we must not pull back and move forward to wipe out the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf."

The entire 114,000-member national police force was on high alert for further at-

tacks. Manila police chief Pedro Bulnag said checkpoints had been strengthened at public places, including train stations and bus terminals.

Iran nuclear agreement: Iranian Foreign Minister Kamel Kharrazi said Tuesday he was hopeful his country could reach a fruitful agreement with European Union countries on Iran's nuclear activities.

The European Union is trying to persuade Iran to abandon its uranium enrichment program, which the United States fears could be used to manufacture nuclear weapons. Iran insisted again Tuesday that its nuclear activities are peaceful.

"[The negotiations] are moving, but the final evaluation will be by mid-March," Kharrazi said after a meeting with Katalin Szili, Hungary's parliament speaker. "We have to wait until then to have exactly our conclusion on how the negotiations have gone."

Spain building fire: The 32-story Madrid office building gutted by fire over the weekend had no automatic sprinkler system because it was 10 feet under the minimum height mandating such equipment, city hall said Tuesday.

The city's fire code, in force since 2003, says automatic fire extinguishers must be installed in buildings where people live or work at heights of 330 feet or higher. Before that, smoke detectors and fire alarms are enough.

Mourning Sister Lucia: Flags flew at half-staff Tuesday in Portugal on a day of national mourning for Sister Lucia, the last of three shepherd children who claimed to have seen the Virgin Mary during 1917 apparitions in Fatima.

Lucia's coffin was taken from the convent in Coimbra, where she lived since 1948, to the city's cathedral for a funeral service. She died Sunday, at age 97, of apparent heart failure.

Pope John Paul II, who met with Lucia during his three visits to Fatima, sent Genoa Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone to preside at the funeral.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

Raids net 53 suspected militants

Businessman from Turkey released by his kidnappers

BY CHRIS TOMLINSON

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. raids netted 53 suspected insurgents across Iraq on Tuesday, as U.S. and Iraqi forces sought to end the frequent bombings and ambushes that have taken a high toll on Iraqi security forces.

U.S. and Iraqi troops swept through Latifiyah, 25 miles south of Baghdad, and detained 35 suspected insurgents, a spokesman for Iraqi National Guard forces in the area said on condition of anonymity.

West of Baghdad, the 256th Brigade from the Louisiana National Guard detained 10 suspects during a four-hour operation that concluded before dawn Tuesday, the military said in a statement.

Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division brought in three suspects following raids in central Baghdad just before midnight Tuesday.

In a separate joint operation in northern Iraq, Iraqi and American forces detained five other suspected insurgents during raids in the Badkubi area, the U.S. military said in a statement.

U.S. officials decline to provide any additional details on the operations. The suspects were detained for further questioning, the military statement added.

Two Iraqi policemen were killed and another two wounded when a bomb exploded near a highway in the western part of Baghdad, Capt. Ahmed Ismael of the interior ministry said.

Gummen and U.S. troops exchanged automatic weapons fire in the area around Baghdad's notorious Haifa Street on Tuesday, police and witnesses said. The gunbattle lasted between 10 to 15 minutes, and U.S. troops sealed off the area afterward, said police. Salim Salam Mohammed. No casualties were reported.

Elsewhere in the capital, a bomb exploded along a highway in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Ghazaliya, killing one civilian and seriously wounding a policeman, a police officer said on condition of anonymity. Footage from Associated Press Television News showed a white police SUV littered with holes from flying shrapnel after the blast.

Kidnappers released Kahrman Sadikoglu, president of the Istanbul-based Tuzla Shipyard, late Monday, a Foreign Ministry official said. He was flown to Baghdad after being held for the evening at a British base in southern Iraq and was scheduled to return to Turkey later Tuesday through Jordan.

The ministry official did not give further details, but newspaper



U.S. Army 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment soldiers secure the scene Tuesday after suspected insurgents set fire to a truck carrying communications cable in Mosul, Iraq.

per reports said Sadikoglu was released after his family paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in ransom. Sadikoglu was apparently abducted after leaving the southern city of Basra on Dec. 16.

His kidnappers later sent a video to a Turkish media organization in Iraq in which he appeared alongside a weeping employee, saying they were being treated well by their captors.

In the tape, Sadikoglu said he was working for the United Na-

tions and the Iraqi government on a project clearing harbors of sunken ships.

Sabah newspaper said his captors initially demanded \$25 million in ransom, but later lowered the demand to a few hundred thousand dollars.

Insurgents in Iraq have kidnapped more than 190 foreigners during a bloody campaign to force U.S.-led coalition troops to leave Iraq. Many have been killed, others remain in captivity, have been released for ransom, freed or have escaped.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Monday, at least 1,463 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,113 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department.

The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is eight higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Monday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,325 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,004 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The most deaths reported by the military:

■ One U.S. soldier was killed Monday when a road-side bomb struck his patrol near Isquoba, Iraq.

The latest statistics reported by the military:

■ Air Force Staff Sgt. Ray R. Isquoba was killed Sunday during a canal rescue in Balad, Iraq; assigned to the 7th Civil Engineering Squadron, Dyess Air Force Base, Texas.

Race to become Iraq's next prime minister narrows

BY JAMIE TARABAY

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The contest to be Iraq's next prime minister narrowed Tuesday after the French-educated finance minister removed himself from consideration in the ranks of the Shiite alliance, making it a two-man race. The party spokesmen said the United Iraqi Alliance, which has provisionally won more than half the seats in the new National Assembly, has been left with two main contenders, interim Vice President Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Ahmad Chalabi, the former Pentagon favorite.

Representatives for both men claimed their candidate was the first choice.

"There is almost a general consensus between most of the main political parties in the alliance on the nomination of Ibrahim al-Jaafari," said Adnan Ali, his chief of staff.

All said there would be no announcement for two days.

In related news, Iraq's Independent Electoral Commission said Tuesday that it received at least six complaints from political groups challenging the results of the Jan. 30 elections.

"We received six complaints

U.S. pullout key to constitutional participation

BY SINAN SALAHEDDIN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — An influential Sunni Muslim group and more than two dozen Sunni and Shiite parties that boycotted the recent Iraqi elections said Tuesday they would only join the political process to draft a new constitution later this year if the government sets a timetable for the withdrawal of American troops.

The National Anti-Occupation Forces, a political grouping formed late last year, also said in statement that the resistance forces struggling against American troops and their allies should be recognized as legitimate.

The group did not specify whether it was referring to insurgency that has been behind more than a year of bloody attacks, bombings, kidnappings, beatings and assassination attempts.

until now, but there other complaints sent by e-mail and we have retrieved them," Adel al-Lami, an official with the electoral commission said.

One complaint came from a group that lost the election, requesting a recount, al-Lami said. He added that a number of complaints are already being handled by the committee responsible for counting ballots.

Parties have until Wednesday

to challenge the results.

Hussein al-Mousawi, a spokesman for the Shiite Political Council, an umbrella group for 38 Shiite political parties, said Chalabi would most likely be the next prime minister.

Al-Mousawi said 80 of the estimated 140 alliance members expected to take part in the newly elected National Assembly favored Chalabi.

Finance Minister Adel Abdul

"If an obvious and declared timetable for withdrawing occupation forces from Iraq was set, then the Iraqi National Anti-Occupation Forces will join the national dialogue and (help) draft the constitution," the group said in a statement. "The Iraqi resistance and its legitimate right in defending its country should be recognized."

The political coalition brings together the anti-American Association of Muslim Scholars, an influential Sunni group of hardline clerics which has suspected ties to the insurgents, with 27 political and religious parties, including the Al-Sadr Movement of firebrand Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

U.S. authorities have repeatedly said there should be no deadline for a troop pullout, saying they would do so when Iraqi troops are able to take over responsibility for security themselves, a position supported by the interim Iraqi government.

Mahdi agreed to withdraw as a candidate in return for unspecified concessions, said Humam Hamoudi, a spokesman for the alliance, who said al-Jaafari was most likely to be its candidate.

Alliance representatives met Tuesday with their religious leaders in the holy city of Najaf to discuss the choice for premier.

An aide to Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the spiritual leader of Iraqi Shiites, said that so far, "offi-

cial and unofficial delegations arrived in Najaf and left without reaching any agreements."

They were to return Wednesday to continue talks, the aide said, on condition of anonymity.

The clergy-backed United Iraqi Alliance won 48 percent of the vote for the National Assembly, the Kurdish alliance won 26 percent, and Allawi, a secular Shiite who supported strong ties to Washington, won only 14 percent. That could make the Kurds, who like the Shiites were oppressed under Saddam Hussein, the kingmakers of the new Iraq.

They already have said they want Jalal Talabani, a Sunni Kurd and leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, to be president. No other candidates have stepped forward.

The National Assembly's first task is to elect a president and two vice presidents by a two-thirds majority. The three then would be subject to a new approval, subject to a new assembly approval. All the top positions are expected to be worked out in advance.

Both al-Jaafari, a physician who lived in London before serving on the now-disbanded Iraqi Governing Council, and Chalabi would give the new Shiite-dominated government a Western accent.

Older soldiers say 'yes' when called to arms

Army, Marine Corps fill gaps with recently retired

BY LISA BURGESS
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Old soldiers never die. Sometimes, they don't even fade away.

"As long as my country needs me — and I can positively contribute — when the flag goes up, I'll be there," said retired Army Col. Emil Zimmerman, who is 57 and is now waiting to see if he can clear the Army's medical requirements before returning to duty.

The flag went up in November 2003 for retired Army Lt. Col. Phillip Ritchey, when facing a critical shortage of eye surgeons, the Army phoned him with a request: Would you consider putting your uniform back on and deploying to Baghdad?

Ritchey, 69, didn't hesitate. Baghdad isn't so different from many of the places where Ritchey and his wife of 48 years, June, had traveled to volunteer their medical skills, he said in a recent telephone interview with Stars and Stripes.

"My wife and I have been doing volunteer work all over the world," said Ritchey, a 1957 graduate of West Point, said. "Baghdad isn't so bad, compared to some of the other places I've been. It's definitely not like Vietnam," where he spent a year in 1967.

The terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, prompted a wave of inquiries from retirees who wanted to serve once again.

But it wasn't until Iraq rotations began to strain the Army and Marine Corps that the services' personnel officials began not only to take such offers seriously, but to actively seek volunteers to fill critical shortages.

The Army has received 12,000 telephone calls and e-mails from veterans offering to come back to active duty, according to Wayne Maricle, chief of operations in the Mobilization Operations Division of the Army's Human Resources Command, or HRC, in St. Louis.

About 2,300 have followed through with formal applications and are considered "confirmed" volunteers, Maricle said.

The Army has returned 357 retirees to active duty, including 286 who are now serving, according to Don Ashenfelter, chief of the Army's retiree mobilization program at HRC.

The Marine Corps has 77 older Marines back on duty and is seeking more volunteers with critical skills who left the Corps within the past five years, according to Lt. Col. Jeffrey Riehl, the Corps' plans and mobilization officer for manpower and reserve affairs.

But the Navy and Air Force, which are working to reduce their active-duty end strength, have chosen not to bring retirees back, spokesmen for those services said. The Air Force did bring back some retired pilots beginning in early 2001, the program has been suspended.

In December, Army officials decided to actively solicit retirees for a potential volunteer re-mobilization, instead of waiting for veterans to initiate the re-entry process.

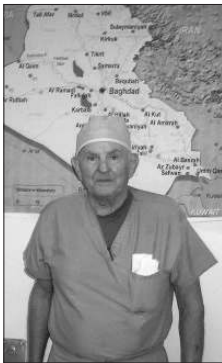
Retirees may be somewhat slower than their younger counterparts, but they make up in experience for what they may lack in the physical arena, Zimmerman said. Zimmerman received an e-mail from HRC on Dec. 30, 2004, asking if he might consider a return.

"I said, not only do I volunteer, I volunteer with both hands."

Now Zimmerman is "on pins and needles," waiting to see if he will be allowed to re-enter after taking a special hearing test the Army required because he wears hearing aids.

"I'm not in it for the glory or the pay," Zimmerman said. "I'm in it because we have troops in harm's way, and I want to take care of troops."

E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgess@stripes.osd.mil



Courtesy to Stars and Stripes

Dr. Phillip Ritchey, 69, was asked by the Army in November 2003 to return to active duty for a tour in Baghdad. Ritchey accepted.

Air Force engineers lend a helping hand to Army

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — Air Force engineers build a bit of everything in Iraq, from a blood storage area and a postal receiving site to a water purification system and security walls for helicopters.

They even designed a road from Kuwait to Baghdad.

And they're doing it for the Army.

"[The Army] said they've run out. They've taken a heavy toll," said Lt. Col. Kyle Hicks, commander of the 732nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron at Balad in December. "They've run short of engineers."

"We fulfill our engineering requirement for one year and the Army takes it back for one year," said Hicks, who is stationed at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C.

Hicks said this is newly plowed ground, attaching Air Force engineers to the Army.

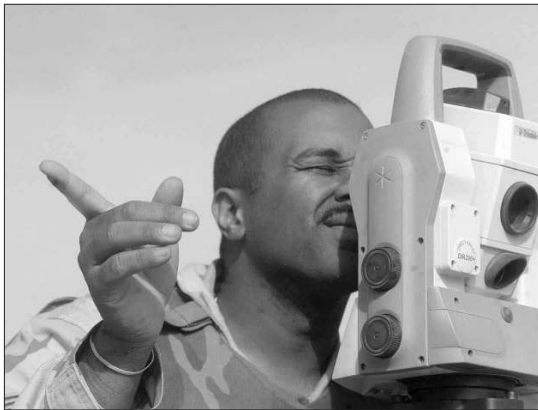
"It's never been done before," he said.

But, he said, all services send their engineers to the same initial course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., for four to nine weeks of basic training.

"You might have six soldiers, six airmen and six sailors all in the same class," he said.

But then they go their separate ways. Normally, he said, the Army engineers are supporting combat troops, building bridges so they can move the fight forward. The Air Force, meanwhile, is hundreds of miles from the front establishing and maintaining bases.

Unlike many Air Force units



RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Air Force Staff Sgt. Darryl Guppy, of the 372nd Engineer Group, surveys a bridge on the Tigris River in Iraq in December. Air Force engineers attached to the Army were helping the Marines build the bridgehead have helped build a little bit of everything, from a postal receiving site to a water purification system.

that draw one or two people from a variety of bases to form a deployed squadron, the engineers go everywhere as a team. In Iraq, they go for a six-month tour.

"The big advantage is, we already know one another," said the Detachment 6 commander, Maj. Tim Fuller, who is from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

While the groups work together, they also find themselves working with other service branches in Iraq, which brings much different rewards.

"It's great," said Maj. Phillip Landeros, who has designed repairs for damaged bridges in Baqouba and Beiji. "If I wasn't attached to the Army, I wouldn't be

going outside the wire. They let me participate in the war."

He also designed an abutment for a bridge being built by the Marines across the Tigris.

Working for the Army isn't bad, said several airmen from Fuller's detachment. They've learned the Army is not as rough and tumble as they thought and they've

"It's hard work. I thought we worked hard in the Air Force... I'll go out with the Marines any day."

Senior Airman
Michael Rambaran

taught the soldiers that airmen aren't as pampered as the soldiers believed.

"We're not really that different," said Airman Timothy Howell. "It's a new learning experience. It's good that we're doing it."

Senior Airman Michael Rambaran said his time with Marines taught him more than just lessons in bridge building.

"It's hard work. I thought we worked hard in the Air Force..." he said. "I'll go out with the Marines any day."

Staff Sgt. Casey Treadway said working in Iraq is not much different than working at Eglin, other than not having a cold beer at the end of the day.

"It's a little more dustier and the equipment's not as good," he said, adding that the loaders, dozers and dump trucks have been beaten up by the high tempo and harsh environment.

Treadway has an engineer's solution to the dust problem. "If we could pave [Iraq]," he said, "we'd be all right."

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More Purple Hearts for battalion

Purple Heart medals are hung from the pockets of U.S. Army 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment soldiers during Monday's ceremony at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq. Purple Hearts were awarded to 25 soldiers in the battalion Monday, for a total of 86 since they arrived in Mosul last October.

1,950 more 1st ID troops home despite Iraq runway problems

By STEVE LIEWER

Stars and Stripes

WÜRZBURG, Germany — Despite a battered runway in Iraq that delayed a day's worth of homecoming flights, 1,950 more 1st Infantry Division soldiers have flown home to Germany since late last week.

Damage to an airfield runway at Forward Operating Base Speicher, the former Iraqi air base in Tikrit, prompted officials to move three Friday flights to Balad Air Base, said Lt. Col. Keith Sleds, the division's logistics officer.

Most 1st ID soldiers have been flying out of Speicher. The shift meant that CH-47 Chinook helicopters had to ferry about 300 troops to Balad, delaying their returns for up to 24 hours. Sleds said the Air Force made extra C-17 flights available so the division would fall far behind in flying troops back to Germany.

"We were back on schedule by Saturday," Sleds said.

Since Saturday, the largest group of soldiers have come from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team and the 106th Finance Battalion in Schweinfurt, and from the 121st Signal Battalion and the 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, out of Kitzingen.

The former Al Sahra air base in Tikrit has two runways: a sturdy 10,000-foot strip made of concrete, and a softer 7,300-foot asphalt one. Sleds said the United States bombed the longer runway during

first Gulf War, damage that is just now being repaired.

The shorter runway has been used for almost a year by smaller C-23 and C-130 transport and cargo aircraft. In January, the Air Force also certified it for use by heavier C-17s. That meant the Big Red One could send its troops directly home from Iraq.

"That has really helped us out," said Capt. William Copernoll, a 1st ID spokesman. "It's allowed us to bypass going down to Kuwait."

Sleds said engineers conducting a routine inspection after a C-17 departure Thursday night discovered an oil pothole he called them "scorcher" — in the asphalt runway. Unable to determine the full extent of the damage at night, he ordered the next day's flights diverted to Balad.

Engineers inspected the damage the next day and were able to make short-term repairs within a few hours, allowing flights to resume. Meanwhile, Sleds said, repairs to the long runway and its adjacent taxiway are expected to be complete within days. When it is ready, the Army plans to close the shorter strip and resurface it.

He said the last 1st ID flights are expected to leave Tikrit by the end of this week. Then the focus will shift to Balad, a more convenient departure point for 3rd Brigade Combat Team troops in the eastern half of the division's sector, which stretches from west of Tikrit east to the Iranian border.

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Vilseck 'mini-base' loaded with perks

By BEN MURRAY

Stars and Stripes

With about 2,000 3rd Brigade Combat Team troops returning from Iraq in the coming weeks, officials at their home base in Vilseck, Germany, have arranged to provide them with all the essentials of a successful reintroduction: plasma TVs, hot dogs and portable toilets that play music when a soldier opens the door.

The amenities are some of the perks in the newest version of the tent cities set up recently in Germany to usher 1st Infantry Division troops through the seven-day redeployment process that tops off a mission to Iraq, said Greg Fobell, project manager for the Vilseck center.

Carpeted floors, Internet ac-

cess and the musical lavatories are some of the little extras included in the \$2 million "mini-base" opened at Vilseck this week to ease the 3rd Brigade back into life in Germany.

The reintroduction center is based on a concept first tried out in Baumholder that has now spread to other bases including Schweinfurt, Würzburg and Kitzingen, Fobell said.

The tent cities consolidate all of a base's administrative offices into a small area where soldiers can attend reintroduction briefings and safety meetings just steps away from booths where they can register their car or meet with a bank representative.

But the mini-bases also have evolved to include leisure areas

for the troops. At Vilseck, one of the six hard-shell tents is specifically dedicated as an R&R center, where soldiers can get a slice of pizza and watch TV between visits to their family service coordinators or financial consultant, Fobell said.

The 640-square-meter tents are large enough to handle hundreds of troops at a time, and will remain standing until the brigade finishes its redeployment in about six weeks, he said.

Though the temporary tent city comes with a high price tag, Fobell said, it's worth the cost to properly thank soldiers for their service in Iraq.

"A \$2 million thank-you isn't too much," he said.

E-mail Ben Murray at: murray@mail.espressosm.com

Kerry bill to help Iraq war veterans' transition home

By LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Many guardsmen returning from overseas deployment are finding their families in debt and their small businesses on the verge of collapse, according to Sen. John Kerry, who unveiled a bill Tuesday to help ease that transition back home.

"A small veterinarian's office or a small contractor, their business falls apart while their gone," said Kerry, D-Mass., in a meeting with defense reporters. "In many cases they've been sustained by the goodwill and patriotism of folks in their community so they can pick up when they come back, but it's not without a lot of effort and a lot of work."

Kerry's legislation would provide tax incentives to employers who keep deployed guardsmen and reservists on their payrolls, and create new loans and grants for self-employed troops to help get their businesses running again.

"What we can do is try to provide economic incentives to cushion that impact and facilitate their efforts to survive," he said.

Kerry proposed many of the same initiatives during his 2004 presidential bid, and several similar ideas also are being floated in Congress.

Kerry's bill would also extend military health care benefits to all reservists and guardsmen, regardless of deployment, and expand posttraumatic stress disorder counseling services.

The National Military Family Association praised those ideas, saying that Guard and Reserve families in particular are facing challenges when their service-member return home.

"About a third of those in the Guard are making less while serving, than they would usually make in salary," said Michelle Joyner, spokeswoman for the NMF.

"Some private employers have taken it upon themselves to make up the difference, but there's nothing that obligates them to do that. So we're definitely concerned



U.S. Sen. John Kerry

about what financial impact this is having," she said.

Several portions of Kerry's bill — the health care expansion and increases in the death benefit, for example — are already being considered in Congress. Kerry's proposal also calls for 30,000 new Army soldiers and 10,000 more Marines, whom he says are needed not for Iraq and Afghanistan but instead for the future demands of the war on terrorism.

He used Tuesday's forum to criticize President Bush's decision not to send more troops to secure Iraq, and reiterated complaints from his failed presidential campaign that Bush has not really reached out to other nations to assist in rebuilding that country.

And he blamed his election loss on the power of Bush's incumbency, saying that the administration has since used many of his proposals, such as increasing the military death benefit and improving national intelligence.

"They had a bully pulpit that we didn't have and they have an automatic trust factor we didn't have," he said. "Americans accepted that I could be the commander in chief. What they were unwilling to do was shift commanders in midstream."

E-mail Leo Shane at: shane@mail.espressosm.com

British soldier described as 'ever-reliable'

OSNABRUECK, Germany — The former commander of a British soldier accused of mistreating Iraqi captives testified Monday that the defendant was an "ever-reliable" person whom he would not associate with the abuse.

Cpl. Daniel Kenyon, 33, the most senior of three soldiers court-martialed in the May 2003 incidents at a British-occupied aid warehouse outside Basra, has said he was not involved and has pleaded not guilty.

Maj. Adrian Grinnome, his commander on a previous posting, testified that Kenyon "was not the sort of person who would just go charging in — he was just more thoughtful than others and had more awareness of his actions. He was ever-reliable."

From The Associated Press

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld gestures Saturday at the beginning of the Munich Conference on Security Policy in Germany. This week, Rumsfeld will try to sell Bush's military blueprint to lawmakers. It will mark his first public testimony before Congress since September.



Rumsfeld to face Congress in selling \$500B budget

By LIZ SIDOTI
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, in his second consecutive tour of duty, has to sell a half-trillion dollar military budget to a skeptical Congress and answer repeated calls to bring troops home from Iraq. It won't be easy. Often testy, his political capital with lawmakers has found new limits.

Old Europe, hostility among his use of an automatic pen to sign "condemnation" letters, were among the Pentagon chief's first-term mistakes that have alienated long-time allies, frustrated soldiers and angered military families.

Democrats called for Rumsfeld's resignation after the Abu Ghraib torture scandal. Even some Republicans expressed little confidence in the defense secretary. Said Sen. Trent Lott of Mississippi: "I'm not a fan of Secretary Rumsfeld."

In his second act as President Bush's defense chief, Rumsfeld, a divisive figure kept under wraps for most of the 2004 presidential campaign, has been the Bush administration's point man in talking up the Iraqi elections on the Sunday talk shows.

He recently traveled to countries that strongly opposed the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq — France and Germany — made a surprise visit to Iraq and attended an international security conference in Munich, where in a rare moment of self-deprecation and rapprochement sought to explain his "Old Europe" jab with a quip.

"That was old Rumsfeld," said the Pentagon chief, who also served as defense secretary and U.S. ambassador to NATO in the '70s.

This week, Rumsfeld will try to sell Bush's military blueprint — some \$500 billion, including about \$82 billion for a new supplemental for Iraq and Afghanistan — to lawmakers at back-to-back hearings. It will mark his first public testimony before Congress since September.

What he's up against

■ **Rocky terrain:** Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's first four years in the Bush administration were marred by spat with Europe, complaints about makeshift armor and criticism for his use of an automatic pen to sign condemnation letters.

■ **Rough road ahead:** In his second consecutive tour of duty, he has to sell a half-trillion-dollar military budget to a skeptical Congress and answer repeated calls to bring the troops home from Iraq.

■ **Warning signs:** Republican critics grumble quietly about Rumsfeld and Democrats have stopped calling for his ouster. Lawmakers say they are resigned to the fact that they're stuck with him.

— The Associated Press

While Republican critics grumble about Rumsfeld quietly and Democrats have stopped calling for his ouster, lawmakers say it's not that they support him more than they did before. Rather, they are resigned to the fact that they're stuck with him, whether they like it or not, because Bush asked him to stay.

Rumsfeld recently said he offered to resign twice; Bush turned him down. "Look, the president chooses who he wants in that position," said Sen. John McCain of Arizona, the No. 2 Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee. In December, it was McCain who said he had "no confidence" in the Pentagon chief.

As for the calls for Rumsfeld's resignation, "The water under the bridge," said Rep. Ike Skelton of Missouri, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee. "He's carrying out policy, essentially," said Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee. "Those are administration and presidential policies."

When he testifies this week, Rumsfeld also will face questions about proposed cuts in weapons programs, including a reduction in the number of aircraft carriers; an exit strategy for U.S. forces in Iraq and the demands on National Guard and reserve units already stretched thin.

The architect of the Iraq war

also will appear before lawmakers whose constituents are mourning the deaths of more than 1,450 U.S. troops.

"His stock has gone up and down over time," said John Pike, a military expert with the Web site GlobalSecurity.org. "It's about at even keel."

On one hand, he's got a bunch of explaining to do. On the other hand, it's clear he's going to be around for some time and they're going to have to deal with him."

Rumsfeld's stock was near the bottom last November. In Kuwait, he told U.S. troops who questioned him about what vehicles that lacked armor — and said they used scraps of metal from a junkyard to outfit Humvees that.

"You go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you might want or wish to have."

His political enemies seized on the comment, in part of a longer response, and the lethal post-invasion insurgency to claim that Rumsfeld was unnecessarily putting U.S. forces in harm's way.

Adding to Rumsfeld's problems was the disclosure that he used an automatic ink machine to put his name on condolence letters sent to families of troops killed in Iraq. He attempted to quench the controversy by quickly announcing he would personally sign all such future letters.

In May, the Pentagon chief will strike fear in congressional districts as he offers his proposed list of military base closings to an independent commission.

Top rebels still elude capture in Iraq raids

By BRADLEY GRAHAM
The Washington Post

BAGHDAD — Intensified military raids in Iraq over the past few months have significantly battered the ranks of midlevel insurgents but have scored few gains against the 30 or so most wanted rebels, according to senior U.S. military officers here.

As much as a third of this group is thought to move in and out of Iraq with some frequency, the officers said. Many have eluded U.S. and Iraqi forces by a combination of moving constantly, avoiding use of telephones and receiving protection from family or tribal connections.

"Are we having success rolling up some of the top-tier leaders? Not at this time," said Brig. Gen. John DePretis, the highest-ranking Army intelligence officer in Iraq. "But we're successfully working the second- and third-tier leaders to put pressure on the top tier."

After a lull in the days after the Jan. 30 election, insurgents have resumed bombings, suicide attacks and assassinations, an increasing share of them directed against Iraqi civilians and security forces. There are now an average of about 60 attacks each day, close to the rate before the election, according to U.S. military tales, and most remain concentrated in Sunni Muslim-populated

provinces of central and north-western Iraq.

U.S. officers classify nearly half of the insurgency's leaders as "former regime members" — people who were operatives of the ruling Baath Party, aides to deposed president Saddam Hussein and officers in his military and security services. Another eight are described as associates of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian-born insurgent leader. Most of the rest are characterized as foreign terrorists.

Intelligence analysts continue to view the insurgency as heavily fragmented and largely the work of small guerrilla cells that lack a central command. But the men on the military's wanted list are suspected of making important contributions in money or tactical coordination.

To better manage military and civilian intelligence efforts aimed at the insurgency's upper ranks, U.S. authorities established a special task force late last year. The Iraqi government issued arrest warrants for 29 figures on the most-wanted list last month to enable foreign governments to seize any who surface abroad.

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But the men on the military's wanted list are suspected of making important contributions in money or tactical coordination.

U.S. in the way of POWs' compensation from Iraq

By DAVID G. SAVAGE

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — The latest chapter in the legal history of torture is being written by U.S. pilots who were beaten and abused by Iraqis during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. And it has taken a strange twist.

The Bush administration is fighting the former prisoners of war in court, trying to prevent federal judges from collecting nearly \$1 billion from Iraq that a federal judge awarded them as compensation for their torture at the hands of Saddam Hussein's regime.

The rationale: Today's Iraqis are good guys, and they need the money.

The case abounds with ironies. It pits the U.S. government squarely against its own war heroes and the Geneva Conventions.

Many of the pilots were tortured in the same Iraqi prison, Abu Ghraib, where U.S. soldiers abused Iraqis 15 months ago. Those Iraq victims, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has said, deserve compensation from the United States.

But the U.S. victims of Iraqi torturers are not entitled to similar payments from Iraq, the U.S. government says.

"It seems so strange to have our own country fighting us on

this," said retired Air Force Col. David W. Eberly, the senior officer among the former POWs.

The case, now being appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, tests whether "state sponsors of terrorism" can be sued in U.S. courts for torture, murder or hostage taking. The court is expected to decide in the next two months whether to hear the appeal.

Congress opened the door to such claims in 1996, when it lifted the shield of sovereign immunity — which basically prohibits lawsuits against foreign governments — for any nation that supports terrorism.

At that time, Iraq was one of seven nations identified by the State Department as sponsoring terrorist activity. The 17 Gulf War POWs looked to have a very strong case when they first filed suit.

They had been undeniably tortured by a tyrannical regime, one that had \$1.7 billion of its assets frozen by the U.S. government.

The picture changed, however, when the United States invaded Iraq nearly two years ago and toppled Saddam from power. On July 21, 2003, two weeks after the Gulf War POWs won their court case in U.S. District Court, the Bush administration intervened to argue that their claims should be dismissed.

Making the return home a little nicer

State politicians seek tax breaks, aid for guardsmen after Iraq duty

By BRAD CAIN
The Associated Press

CORVALLIS, Ore. — At a time when the National Guard is stressed by long combat tours and mounting casualties in Iraq, states are finding creative ways to show their appreciation for the troops.

In Oregon, the governor and lawmakers have introduced more than a dozen bills to give tax breaks, college tuition aid and even free hunting and fishing licenses to troops.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson signed a bill on Feb. 2 making his state the first to underwrite \$250,000 in life insurance for Guard members. Nearly two dozen other states are considering doing the same.

"We answered the call to arms; we did our job," said Sgt. Shane Ward, 24, an Oregon National Guard member who received a Purple Heart last year after being wounded by a roadside bomb near Baghdad. "It makes me feel good. Even if you don't support the war, you need to support the troops."

More than 55,000 National Guard troops are deployed in Iraq, and 171 have died there since the war began nearly two years ago.

The states' efforts to help Guard members come as the Bush administration is proposing to increase the tax-free "death gratuity" for U.S. troops killed in war zones. The payment is now \$12,420 and would grow to \$100,000.

Some believe the efforts under way in state capitals will ease concerns about an exodus of experienced soldiers in the wake of long deployments in Iraq. They also hope that more recognition at the state level could only help the Guard to retain experienced soldiers and recruit new ones.

"Every little bit helps," said John Goheen, spokesman for the National Guard Association. "Duty is tough in Iraq. When guardsmen come home and hear that the Legislature is passing these bills, they appreciate it."

Among the Guard measures pending in other states:

■ In North Dakota, Gov. John Heide has proposed a bonus payment of \$1,800 for any National Guard soldier who served in Iraq.

■ Connecticut is considering a deferral program for state income tax and local property tax payments and a toll-free number to help troops find in-state benefit programs.

■ Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty is proposing a package of bills

to give National Guard members full college tuition reimbursement, re-enlistment bonuses and state tax benefits.

In Oregon, Senate President Peter Courtney plans to introduce about six Guard-related bills this year. He said states need to make an extra effort to avoid a repeat of the Vietnam era, when troops felt little support after returning home.

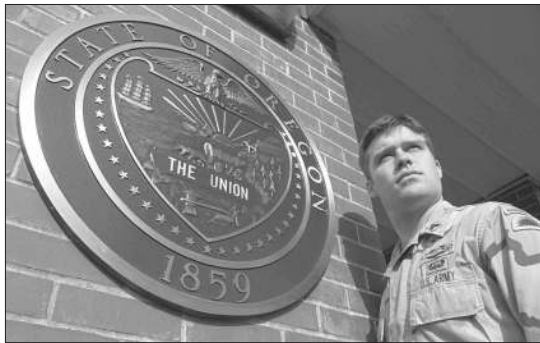
"It was bad enough that they were in that war, but the lack of support at home really ruined a lot of those individuals for the rest of their lives," Courtney said.

But efforts to give tax breaks and other new benefits to Oregon Guard members could run up against a tight state budget in which health care services and other areas already are facing cuts.

Democratic

Gov. Ted Kulongoski, a former Mideast war veteran, said nearly all of the funerals for Oregon soldiers killed in Iraq, is proposing a modest \$700,000 "appreciation package" for Guard members.

A Republican lawmaker, Rep. Jeff Kropf, believes the Legislature should spend as much as \$4



Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. Shane Ward, of Alsea, Ore., was wounded and earned a Purple Heart in Iraq. Ward, outside the National Guard headquarters earlier this month in Corvallis, Ore., says it is heartening to learn that Oregon state lawmakers and lawmakers around the country are making it their job to improve benefits for National Guard soldiers who have served in Iraq.

million.

While the governor and lawmakers debate how much to spend, Sgt. 1st Class Philip Jacques of Albany, Ore., who was wounded by a roadside bomb in July, said he is glad that helping Guard members seem to be at the top of the legislative agenda.

"Everyone appreciates what they are trying to put through the Legislature. It's the right thing to do," Jacques said.

A show of support

DEBT OF GRATITUDE: Several states are finding creative ways — college tuition and tax breaks, among them — to show their appreciation to National Guard troops overseas.

CALL TO DUTY: More than 55,000 Guard members are de-

ployed in Iraq, and 171 have died there since the war began nearly two years ago.

STEM THE TIDE: Some legislators think the aid will help the Guard both retain and recruit soldiers.

— The Associated Press

Contractual help available through Ohio bill

By CONNIE MABIN
The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — When Lisa Spencer's Marine husband was called for duty in Iraq, it was hard enough to find the strength to comfort their three small children. But then the bills came: for the car, for the rent.

"There was a problem with the military checks and we didn't get paid right away," she said. "I had to tell my landlord that I had no money and he would have to wait for the rent."

When Spencer explained that money was on the way, the landlord let her stay. But the ordeal created stress that Spencer could have done without.

A law called the Ohio Patriot Plan, which Gov. Bob Taft was expected to sign Tuesday, is meant to spare Ohio families such stress.

The legislation would make it illegal to evict financially struggling immediate family of military servicemembers who have been deployed.

The measure also makes it easier for servicemembers to get out of long-term contracts for things such as car leases and cell phones, and it prohibits disconnection of utilities either during deployment or while injured soldiers recuperate.

"It's hard for all of us to adjust to him not being here," said Spencer, of Salem. "To deal with all that and to have financial problems, it's hard. It's not that I don't want to pay my bills. It would be nice to have that cushion if something goes wrong."

The bill sponsored by Rep. Peter Ujvagi, a Democrat, was modeled after a New York law. Several other states, including Alabama,



Linda Steffen, holding a picture of her son, Marine Lance Cpl. Matthew Steffen in Salem, Ohio, said her son has not encountered problems with his bills, but she knows not every servicemember is so lucky. In an effort to help those troops, Ohio is likely to enact legislation making it illegal to evict financially struggling immediate family of those deployed.

Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Illinois and Iowa, are now working on similar legislation.

The legislation creates new rules but does

not establish penalties for companies that don't follow them. Ujvagi's office said the law would allow military families to sue to seek monetary damages from people or companies that don't comply.

Michael Adelman, a lobbyist with the Ohio Bankers' League, said the lending and leasing industry supports the bill. "The last thing you want to do is create additional hurdles for these fine people who are putting their lives on the line," Adelman said.

The measure doesn't exempt military families from paying for things like rent and utilities, but gives them time to work out payment arrangements. For services such as cell phones and car leases, businesses would be barred from collecting early termination fees.

Servicemembers must work through military authorities to take advantage of the law. Some businesses expressed concern about the bill as it moved through the Legislature, including a fear of too much paperwork and complicated rules. But those concerns were worked out during hearings, lobbyists said.

Among other things, the bill also prohibits soldiers' life insurance policies from being canceled. Also, military members' children could continue going to school in their home districts even if a parent is assigned to serve in another community.

Elizabeth Henderson, director of the United Service Organizations in Cleveland, said she's heard from dozens of military families who are pleased with the bill.

"For them to know that while they're overseas or even serving here in the U.S. that they don't have to worry about their car being taken away or their mortgage being taken away, that gives them such a sense of relief so that they can really focus," she said.

IN THE WORLD

Coal mine blast kills more than 200

Cause unclear; incident worst since 1940s

BY STEPHANIE HOO

The Associated Press

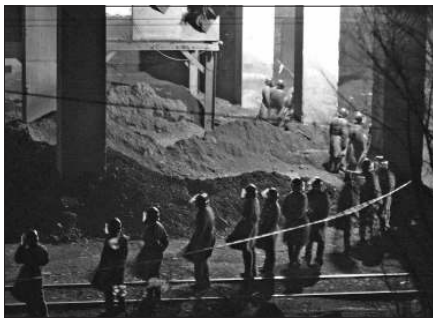
FUXIN, China — Three years after a promised overhaul of China's workplace safety system, the government on Tuesday said a gas explosion killed 203 miners and left 12 more missing — the worst mining disaster reported in the country since Communist rule began in 1949.

Dozens of rescuers were searching through the night in subfreezing temperatures for anyone still trapped from Monday's blast in the Sunjiawan coal mine in northeast China's Liaoning province.

The cause of the blast, which occurred about 790 feet underground, was under investigation, state media said.

Workers reported feeling a sudden, strong tremor shake the mine 10 minutes before the blast, Xinhua news agency said, quoting Zhang Yunfu, vice general manager of Fuxin Coal. Moments later, gas detectors lost their signals and one of the mine's main pits filled with smoke, the agency said.

A cordon of men in matching dark coats and helmets stood side by side blocking the entrance to the mine late Tuesday, as cars



full of paramilitary police patrolled the site. Vans waited to transport any wounded to hospitals in Fuxin, a gritty, soot-covered city where mining is the main industry.

State media reported that 28 injured lay in hospital beds suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, burns and fractures. All the injured were in stable condition, except for one who was in a coma due to a head injury caused by flying debris, Xinhua said.

President Hu Jintao and other Chinese leaders ordered local officials "to spare no effort to rescue those stranded in the mine,"

Xinhua said. It said they called for "strict measures" to prevent more such disasters.

In October 2002, the government created the country's first national safety laws and launched a nationwide effort to improve job safety with a network of workplace inspectors. But deadly accidents have continued to plague the country's coal mines and factories.

Last year more than 6,000 miners died in fires, floods and explosions — an average of about 16 workers per day.

The New York-based rights group China



Left: Chinese paramilitary police man a cordon at the entrance to the Sunjiawan coal mine in Fuxin, China, Tuesday. At least 203 miners died in an explosion at the mine Monday. Above: Chinese State Councillor Hua Jiamin talks with an injured miner. Hua is reported to be supervising the rescue effort.

AP photos

Labor Watch said Tuesday that China should also allow independent nongovernment organizations to monitor work safety.

In 1942, China's northeast was the site of the world's deadliest coal mining disaster when an accident killed 1,549 miners in Japanese-occupied Manchuria during World War II.

Last year, China accounted for 90 percent of the world's coal mining deaths.

A blast in the northern province of Shaanxi in November killed 166 miners. Another in October killed 148.

Terror threat seen strong

UNITED NATIONS — Al-Qaida remains determined to carry out its campaign of terror and is expected to further escalate its attacks, a U.N. team monitoring sanctions against the group said.

Terror attacks sponsored by al-Qaida and weapons of mass destruction are among the chief threats confronting the world, the team said in a report on Tuesday.

The Taliban, which sheltered al-Qaida leaders in Afghanistan before being toppled, also continues to "threaten the stability and reconstruction of the country," the report said.

"The team sees no let-up in the determination of al-Qaida, the Taliban and their associates to continue their campaign of terror," the report said.

Sharon speaks his peace

JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Tuesday that Israel is prepared to make "painful compromises for peace," and has begun coordination with Palestinians on Israel's planned pullout from the Gaza Strip.

However, as Sharon spoke, Palestinian security officials reported that Israeli troops on patrol in the West Bank killed a 14-year-old Palestinian boy who threw stones at them.

Addressing the Foreign Press Association in Jerusalem, Sharon said last week's summit showed that there can be progress toward peace if violence is ended.

At the summit, a 14-year-old Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas declared a truce.

From The Associated Press

Protesters in Lebanon blame Syria for killing

BY SAM F. GHATTAS

The Associated Press

BEIRUT, Lebanon — An angry mob attacked Syrian workers in southern Lebanon on Tuesday, blaming Damascus for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, and the interior minister suggested the killing may have been carried out by a suicide bomber.

Syria has denied any involvement in Hariri's assassination, which raised fears that Lebanon might revert to the political violence of the 1970s and '80s, and the U.S. Embassy in Beirut warned Americans in the Lebanese capital to exercise extreme caution.

In Washington, White House spokesman Scott McClellan on Tuesday called Syria's presence a "destabilizing force," and said Lebanon must shake free of occupation by Syria, which maintains 15,000 troops here since the civil war ended in 1990 and has the final say in internal Lebanese politics.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice ordered U.S. Ambassador Margaret Scobey home from Syria amid rising tensions over the assassination, a U.S. official said Tuesday.

Before his assassination, Hariri had positioned himself in opposition to a faction more solidly backed by Syria.

Interior Minister Suleiman Frangieh sug-



Supporters of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri ride through the streets of Beirut on Tuesday. Hariri was killed Monday.

gested that, based on the crater in the middle of the road and preliminary reports, the attack may have been carried out by a suicide bomber who rammed Hariri's motorcade with a vehicle laden with explosives.

Although most suspicion has fallen on Syria or its supporters in Lebanon, it was clear the possibilities also might include rogue Syrian intelligence operatives, or even factions among the country's myriad religious groups.

In Hariri's hometown, Sidon, on the Mediterranean coast, dozens of demonstrators attacked Syrian workers Tuesday, slightly wounding five before police intervened. Hundreds of others marched in the streets.

Panel: Much felled Paris airport roof

The Associated Press

PARIS — A government-appointed commission of inquiry concluded that an array of problems led to the partial collapse of the roof of a futuristic terminal at Charles de Gaulle airport that killed four people, the panel announced Tuesday.

The "initial security reserves" of Terminal Z were "weak," the panel said, but there was likely no single cause for the May 23 collapse of the vaulted roof.

The head of the commission, Jean Berthier, speaking at a news conference, refused to talk of a "conceptual error" in the design of the terminal's vaulted roof, although he said there were some "weak points."

In its report, the commission said there was "important fissuring in certain zones [that] probably developed at the moment of construction," a "likely sign of 'insufficient or badly positioned reinforcements.'"

The report also pointed to a weak support girder and the position of metallic struts inside the concrete.

"Rather than speaking of one cause for the collapse, we should speak of the conjunction of factors which combined to lead to the ruin of a structure whose initial security reserves were weak," the panel concluded.

The commission was not asked to determine who was to blame for the accident. Judicial officials are investigating who should be held responsible for the collapse.

Falling glass, steel and masonry killed four travelers — two Chinese, one Czech and one Lebanese — and injured three others.

Berthier said the covering of the vaulted roof "progressively fragile" and "materials weakened" over time.

Terminal ZB was designed by French architect Paul Andreu, who is currently working on a new opera house in Beijing.

Afghan province to be first to see female governor

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — President Hamid Karzai is preparing to appoint Afghanistan's first female provincial governor, his spokesman said Tuesday, in another step toward reviving women's rights trampled by the former hardline Taliban government.

An all-female shortlist including former Women's Minister Habiba Sarabi has been drawn up for the governorship of central Bamian province, presidential spokesman Jawed Ludin said, though no decision has been taken.

"One of those ladies will be the governor of Bamian," Ludin said at a news conference. "If a woman is able to do the job, the law says we can appoint her."

Sarabi said she had discussed the position with Karzai after rejecting his suggestion that she become an Afghan ambassador abroad.

"I want to be inside the country at the service of my people," she said.

Millions of women and girls

have returned to work and school since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001. Equality before the law is embedded in a new constitution, and some women have abandoned the head-to-toe public veiling that was mandatory under the tough Islamic regime. Seats are also reserved for women in the two-chamber parliament to be installed by elections this year.

However, conservative custom still confines most rural women to the home, and health services to alleviate high levels of maternal and infant mortality are being extended only slowly. Karzai has also been criticized for including only three women in his new, nearly 30-strong Cabinet.

Sarabi said she had a good chance of gaining acceptance in Bamian, a province inhabited almost exclusively by fellow ethnic Hazaras, where women have traditionally been freer to work and gain education.

"It wouldn't be possible for me to be governor of provinces in the south, southeast of southwest," she said. "Karzai said that the best place would be Bamian."



U.S. soldiers look toward North Korea on Tuesday at Dora Observation Post in Paju, near the demilitarized zone of Panmunjom, South Korea. Tensions on the divided Korean Peninsula are at new heights over the North's announcement last week that it has built nuclear weapons.

AP

South Korea calls for talks with North after nuclear declaration

By SOO-JEONG LEE

The Associated Press

DORA OBSERVATION POST, South Korea — South Korea has proposed high-level military talks with North Korea, focusing on ways to avoid accidental clashes now that the North has claimed to have nuclear weapons.

South Korea's defense ministry said the talks would be a way of engaging the communist North even as it refuses to return to six-nation talks on its nuclear program.

"North Korea has yet to respond to our proposal, but we are expecting the North side to make a sincere and positive response," the ministry said Tuesday.

In Pyongyang, ruling Workers' Party officials and military officers gathered Tuesday to celebrate the birthday of leader Kim Jong Il with defiant rhetoric, according to the North's official news agency, KCNA. Kim turns 63 on Wednesday.

"If the U.S. recklessly opts for a war of aggression despite the repeated warning of the [North], our army and people will mobilize all potentials ... and achieve a final victory in the confrontation with the U.S.," said Choe Thae Bok, a secretary of the Workers' Party Central Committee.

South Korean officials have said it's too early to declare the North a nuclear power, saying the alleged weapons haven't been tested or confirmed, and say Pyongyang should return to six-nation talks aimed at getting it to give up any nuclear weapons development in return for economic benefits.

Hong Seok-hyun, South Korea's newly appointed ambassador to Washington, said Tuesday that he believed North Korea's announcement "was meant to boost its negotiating position."

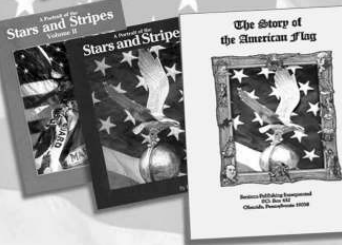
South Korean intelligence officials said Tuesday that even if North Korea has nuclear weapons, it lacks the technology to deliver them by missile.

On Tuesday, dozens of South Korean tourists arrived at Dora Observation Post, 37 miles north of Seoul, to peep into the North.

Many of the tourists expressed concerns over North Korea's statement last week, and appeared to be shocked by the closeness of North Korea as seen from the South Korean military vantage point.

"It's so close that I am thinking if they invade, we are all going to die," said Ji In-jong, a 70-year-old tourist.

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A call for protection from Karadzic's family

BELGRADE, Serbia-Montenegro — The brother of war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic urged police in comments published Tuesday to protect the fugitive's family members.

Luka Karadzic said in an interview with the Belgrade Blic daily that bounty hunters have been stalking family members living in Bosnia or neighboring Serbia-Montenegro since last summer, accusing them on the streets.

Radovan Karadzic led the Serb side during Bosnia's 1992-95 war and was indicted for alleged atrocities, including genocide, by the U.N. tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands.

Court rules for activists in 'McLibel' case

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Two vegetarian activists convicted of libeling fast-food giant McDonald's Corp. did not receive a fair trial in Britain, the European Court of Human Rights ruled Tuesday.

The Strasbourg, France-based court said David Morris and Helen Steel should have received legal aid from the British government when they were tried in what became widely known as the "McLibel" case, the longest in English history.

The two activists passed out flyers in 1984 that claimed the U.S.-based company was selling unhealthy food, was to blame for starvation in the Third World, and was destroying rainforests.

Kerosene heater cited in Iran mosque fire

TEHRAN, Iran — A mosque fire that killed 59 people and injured another 350 was blamed on a kerosene heater that was too close to a thick curtain separating male and female worshippers, Iran's official news agency reported Tuesday.

A survivor of Monday's fire said some of the deaths were caused by a stampede of panicked people trying to escape the flames racing through the Arg Mosque, which was more crowded than usual because of a Muslim holiday.

However, there were differences over the cause. IRNA also reported unidentified witnesses as saying a woman's veil caught fire from the heater and the flames spread to the curtain.

From The Associated Press

No tiger cloning

SYDNEY, Australia — An Australian museum said Tuesday it has abandoned a project to clone a Tasmanian Tiger — the extinct, wolflike striped creature that carried its young in a pouch.

The Australian Museum began research in 1999 to clone the tiger from cells of a pup found preserved in formaldehyde in a museum in the island state of Tasmania.

The museum said the project had ended because the preservative had degenerated the DNA samples.

Stolen beer truck

SAINT JOHN, New Brunswick — The defense lawyer for the New Brunswick man accused of stealing 50,000 cans of Moosehead beer said Monday he won't present any evidence in the trial.

Lawyer Ron Morris, representing Wade Haines, said Monday that the prosecution hasn't proven its case against his client.

Haines, 31, is charged with theft over \$5,000.

He was supposed to deliver a truckload of beer destined for the Mexican market to Toronto last August, but neither he nor the truck ever made it.

Instead, the tractor-trailer was found nearly empty and running in a parking lot in Grand Falls, New Brunswick, along the Maine border.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Constable Pierre Garvais, the lead investigator in the probe into the theft, also testified that there are several suspects, even though only one man has been charged.

Terminal bank robber

ROME — Looking tired, he would gently tell the bank teller "Give me all the money in the bag," he have a bomb in this bag," police said.

The 53-year-old owner of a struggling clothing store carried out 13 bank robberies in the northern city of Turin because he had terminal cancer and wanted to leave money for his wife and three daughters, a police spokeswoman said Tuesday.

Police tracked down the suspect on Monday, three days after a policeman spotted him in his car and recognized his face from security camera footage, the spokeswoman said.

'Kangaroo Poo' paper

CANBERRA, Australia — An environmentally friendly manufacturer on Tuesday created its first batch of paper from marsupial manure.

The owners around Burnie in Tasmania state helped scrape together 55 pounds of kangaroo and wallaby dung for Creative Paper, Tasmania, to make its first batch of the unique paper pulp, manager Joanne Gair said.

"It's a great product for tourists but it's also something that gets our eco-friendly message home to a lot of people," said Gair.

The completed sand-colored sheets will be embossed with "Genuine Kangaroo Poo," she said.

From The Associated Press

Roman find lends legend credence

Archaeological dig reveals remains of 8th century palace

BY SARAH BARDEN
The Associated Press

ROME

Legend has it that Rome was founded in 753 B.C. by Romulus and Remus, the twin sons of the god of war Mars, who were suckled as infants by a she-wolf in the woods.

Now, archaeologists believe they have found evidence that at least part of that tale may be true: Traces of a royal palace discovered in the Roman Forum have been dated to roughly the period of the eternal city's legendary foundation.

Andrea Carandini, a professor of archaeology at Rome's Sapienza University who has been conducting excavations at the Forum for more than 20 years, said he made the discovery over the past month at the spot where the Temple of Romulus stands today.

It is next to the Sanctuary of Vesta — the Roman goddess of the hearth — just outside the Palatine walls, site of the earliest traces of civilization in Rome.

Where previously archaeologists had only found ruins in the area dating back to the 8th century B.C., Carandini and his team unearthed traces of regal splendor: A 3,700-square-foot palace, 1,130 of which was covered and the rest courtyard. There was a monumental entrance, and elaborate furnishings and ceramics.

The walls were made of wood and clay, with a floor of wood shavings and pressed turf. It was tests on the clay that allowed the archaeologists to confirm the age of the find.

Carandini said that the residence had "absolutely extraordinary dimensions, dimensions not formerly known."

"It could be nothing other than the royal palace," he said, adding that at that period the average abode measured about one-tenth of the size of the uncovered residence.

Carandini also found a hut where vestal virgins are believed to have lit a sacred flame.

Eugenio La Rocca, the superintendent for monuments for the city of Rome, said Carandini's interpretation of the ruins appears to be accurate.

"It seems to me that what is emerging from the excavation of Carandini, who can be considered the highest authority in this



The Roman Forum is seen in this 1999 photo. Andrea Carandini, a professor of archaeology at Rome's Sapienza University, said Monday the traces of a royal palace discovered in the Roman Forum have been dated to roughly the period of the city's legendary foundation in 753 B.C. Carandini has been conducting excavations at the Forum for more than 20 years.

field, is a very coherent archaeological reading," La Rocca told the newspaper *Il Messaggero*.

"Whoever created the legend did so with the knowledge that behind it there was a historical foundation," he told the newspaper. "That doesn't mean the story of Romulus and Remus necessarily happened that way, but only that memory as it was handed down by the majority of the Latin writers is much more than a hypothesis."

In Rome's founding myth, the daughter of a king deposed by his brother was forced to become a vestal virgin to prevent her from having children. But Rhea Silvia became pregnant with sons of the god Mars.

When the infants were discovered, the princess was imprisoned and the babies

were set adrift in a basket on the Tiber River — which today winds its way through Rome.

The twins floated ashore safely and were suckled by a she-wolf until they were rescued by a shepherd, who brought them up.

When they learned the story of their past, they killed the usurper Amulius, restored Rhea Silvia's father — Numa — to the throne, and set off to found a city on the site where they were taken care of by the wolf.

While there is little evidence of the historical existence of twins called Romulus and Remus who founded Rome, the discovery of the palace offers tantalizing indications that the legend had roots in fact.

Carandini began his career as an art historian before becoming involved in archaeological digs. His first significant excavation was that of Villa Piazza Armerina, near Enna in Sicily 1982.

"That doesn't mean the story of Romulus and Remus necessarily happened that way, but only that memory as it was handed down by the majority of the Latin writers is much more than a hypothesis."

Eugenio La Rocca
Superintendent
for Rome monuments

Smoking ban prompts call for outdoor ashtrays

The Associated Press

ROME — First they complained about all those cigarettes, and one of Europe's strictest anti-smoking laws was born. Now Italian consumer groups are fuming over the ones that are snuffed out.

Codacoms, a Rome-based consumer advocacy group, appeared on Monday to municipalities across Italy to put ashtrays on the sidewalks outside restaurants, bars, pubs and other establishments where smokers have been huddling to puff away since the

law went into effect last month.

Codacoms claimed the number of butts on public sidewalks has risen by 40 percent since smokers were forbidden to light up inside places open to the public. That percentage was based on estimates cited by bar, disco and restaurant owners.

Violators of the smoking ban face fines ranging from \$36 to see to it that their clients follow the law risk even higher penalties.

The consumer group threatened to lodge complaints with prosecutors if local governments don't start beefing up street-cleaning brigades or posting more ashtrays outside public establishments.

Codacoms claimed that citizens' health is imperiled by the accumulation of saliva-stained butts.

The outdoors, private homes, and restaurants, pubs and bars with ventilated smoking rooms are the only places spared from the smoking crackdown, which has the strong backing of Italy's health minister, who is a physician.

Although establishments had months to prepare for the law, most haven't set up separate smoking areas, contending that the expense and bother weren't worth it.



IN THE STATES

Congress questioning Bush requests

BY ALAN FRAM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats are using President Bush's request for \$77 billion for conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan to criticize his war policies and soaring federal deficits, but congressional approval of something very much like the request seems inevitable.

Bush sent an \$81.9 billion proposal to Capitol Hill on Monday that includes nearly \$1 billion for tsunami aid to battered Indian Ocean countries, new broadcasts aimed at Europe's Muslims and offices for the newly created director of national intelligence.

Most of the \$77 billion directly related to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan is for the Defense Department — with the rest for aid to U.S. allies, the Palestinians and other areas.

Bush said the additional money for the remainder of the 2005 budget year would help Iraq and Afghanistan pursue "the path of democracy and freedom." He said the funds would help protect U.S. troops, track down terrorists and enhance Middle East peace prospects.

Democrats said the proposal did little to cor-

"This supplemental request provides support for our men and women in uniform, but it provides little basis for optimism for a stable and secure Iraq."

Sen. Robert C. Byrd
D-W.Va.

rect the problems surrounding the U.S. effort in Iraq, where national elections were held last month amid a relentless insurgency that has slowed reconstruction efforts.

"This supplemental request provides support for our men and women in uniform, but provides little basis for optimism for a stable and secure Iraq," said Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., one of the president's most persistent war critics.

Democrats also said the request, which Bush wants to be financed through borrowing, underscores the budget's problems.

The \$257 billion budget Bush sent Congress last week projected a record \$427 billion deficit this year and \$390 billion in red ink in 2006. While it included Bush's latest request, the budget omitted any new war funds next year, which are considered certain to be needed.

"It's going to get bigger," Rep. John Spratt, D-S.C., said of the shortfall.

The new chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Rep. Jerry Lewis, R-Calif., said he hoped to ship the bill to Bush's desk by early April. But he added, "Congress will exercise our constitutional obligations" — code words for the likelihood that some changes will be made.

Approval would push the total spent in Iraq and Afghanistan and other efforts against terrorism beyond \$300 billion, including the costs of fighting and reconstruction. It stood at about \$228 billion before Bush's latest request, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, which writes reports for Congress.



Defrocked priest Paul Shanley, a central figure in the Boston Archdiocese clergy sex abuse scandal, is led from court in handcuffs following his sentencing in Middlesex Superior Court in Cambridge, Mass.

Defrocked priest gets 12 to 15 years in prison

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Defrocked priest Paul Shanley, a central figure in the Boston Archdiocese clergy sex abuse scandal, was sentenced Tuesday to 12 to 15 years in prison for raping a boy repeatedly in the 1980s, sometimes in a church confessional.

"It is difficult to imagine a more egregious misuse of trust and authority," Judge Stephen Neel said in imposing the term. But he turned aside a prosecutor's request for a life sentence.

Shanley, 74, once known for being a hip "street priest" who reached out to troubled children and homosexuals, was convicted last week of two counts each of child rape and indecent assault and battery on a child.

He will be eligible for parole after serving two-thirds of his sentence, or 8 years. He also was sentenced to 10 years' probation.

The case hinged on the reliability of the accuser's memories of the abuse, which he said he recovered three years ago as the clergy sex abuse scandal unfolded in the media.

Prosecutor Lynn Rooney had requested a life sentence, saying Shanley used his position of authority to gain the trust of the boys he then molested.

"He used his collar and he used his worshipped status in that community," Rooney said. "There has been no remorse shown on the part of this defendant. There has been no acceptance of responsibility."

Shanley's lawyer, Frank Mondano, did not suggest a specific term, but asked Neel to allow Shanley to serve his sentence in a county lockup rather than state prison. The judge refused. Another notorious pedophile priest, John Geoghan, was killed in a Massachusetts state prison, allegedly by a fellow inmate.

Mondano said the prosecution's case was built on "villification, half truths and lies." He said he plans to appeal.

Among the spectators who packed the courtroom for Shanley's sentencing hearing were other people who accused Shanley of sexually abusing them but were not part of the criminal case.

Flu shot and seniors

CHICAGO — A new study based on more than three decades of U.S. data suggests that giving flu shots to the elderly has not saved any lives.

Led by National Institutes of Health researchers, the study challenges standard government dogma and aims to confuse senior citizens. During last fall's flu vaccine shortage, thousands of older Americans, heeding the government's public health message, stood in long lines to get their shots.

"There is a sense that we're all going to die if we don't get the flu shot," said the study's lead author, Lone Simonsen, a senior epidemiologist at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in Bethesda, Maryland. "Maybe that's a little much."

U.N. official implicated

WASHINGTON — The chairman of a Senate panel said Tuesday that newly obtained Iraqi documents provide "clear and direct" evidence that the former head of the U.N. oil-for-food program may have benefited financially from oil deals involving Saddam Hussein's government.

Sen. Norm Coleman, R-Minn., chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs investigations subcommittee, said the documents, presented at a hearing, suggest that Ben Sevan didn't use his position as an intermediary in Iraqi oil sales, as investigators have alleged, but personally received valuable oil allocations. Sevan may have earned up to \$1.2 million, according to the subcommittee's staff.

Pentagon cop dies

ARLINGTON, Va. — A Pentagon police officer died Monday from injuries he received last month when he was run down by a carjacker, the first member of the security force to die in the line of duty.

Officer James Felts, 41, a 12-year veteran of the force, had not regained consciousness since Jan. 11, when he was hit while trying to stop a speeding vehicle. The suspect was driving the wrong way on a one-way street while trying to elude police.

Boy guilty of murder

CHARLESTON, S.C. — A 15-year-old boy who claimed the antidepressant Zoloft drove him to kill his grandparents was found guilty Tuesday of murder.

Christopher Pittman hung his head as the verdict was read after about six hours of deliberations. He faces 30 years to life in prison for the sentencing Tuesday afternoon.

The trial was the first case involving a youngster who says an antidepressant caused him to kill. Pittman's lawyer said it came at a time of heightened scrutiny over the use of antidepressants among children.

From The Associated Press

Journalist: U.S. officials in Iraq steered coverage

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A journalist who helped Iraq form a new broadcast network in 2003 testified Monday that U.S. occupation officials were more interested in airing their own activities than those essential to Iraqis.

Don North, who served as a U.S. government adviser to the Iraqi Media Network, said the network became an irrelevant mouthpiece for the U.S. Coalition Provisional Authority.

The network was given "a laundry list of CPA activities" instead of stories on electricity security, the lack of electricity and jobs, said North, an independent journalist.

North testified at a hearing of the Senate

Democratic Policy Committee, a party organization. Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., head of the panel, said Democrats had asked Republican-led Senate committees to conduct hearings on U.S. waste and missteps in Iraq but the GOP chairmen refused.

In addition to North, another former U.S. adviser in Iraq — Frank Willis — testified he thought he was in the Wild West in 2003 as he watched colleagues pull \$2 million in fresh bills from a vault and stuff them in a contractor's gunnysack.

North told the hearing he wanted the media network to be like the Public Broadcasting System in the United States. Instead, he said,

U.S. authorities told him "we were running a public diplomacy operation" for the occupation government.

Willis testified that cash payments not being stuffed in sacks were made from a pickup truck that bore the name of Iraq's grounded airline. American authorities thought the vehicle would "meld into the environment," Willis said.

Much of the money was Iraqi funds, Willis said. Army Lt. Col. Joseph Yoswa, a Defense Department spokesman, said the occupation authority "strived earnestly for sound management, transparency and oversight." He said U.S. funds were subject to "contract and accounting practices required by U.S. law."

Study: pain killers linked to heart troubles

BY THERESA AGOVINO

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A new study has linked pain killers Vioxx, Celebrex and Bextra to increased cardiovascular risk, including findings of other trials that have already sparked concern over the safety of a popular category of drugs.

Vioxx and Celebrex increased patients' risk of heart attack and stroke by about 20 percent, while Bextra increased the risk by 50 percent, according to a study by WellPoint Inc., the nation's largest provider of health benefits, which is based in Indianapolis.

New report finds increased chance of cardiovascular problems among users of Vioxx, Bextra, Celebrex

Dr. Sam Nussbaum, WellPoint's executive vice president and chief medical officer, said Monday the study is further evidence of an "increasingly compelling trend" of data that show the drugs elevate patients' risk of heart attack and stroke.

Later this week, the Food and Drug Administration is holding hearings on the safety of the class of drugs known as Cox-2 inhibitors. Merck & Co. removed Vioxx from the market last year after a

study showed it doubled patients' risk of heart attack and strokes.

Pfizer Inc. makes Bextra and Celebrex, which remain on the market.

WellPoint studied the records of 7,232 patients over the age of 40 taking one of the three drugs and compared them with records of 629,245 people older than the age of 40 who were not taking any of the drugs. WellPoint shared the data with researchers at Indiana University's medical school,

who adjusted the information for risk of heart attack and stroke risk factors, such as age.

WellPoint began the study after Vioxx was removed from the market. It examined patient records from January 2001 through June 2004. All the patients were on the drugs for at least 18 months. Merck officials have insisted the problems with Vioxx didn't become apparent until patients were taking the drug for at least that long.

Drug companies have criticized studies that retrospectively examine patient records, saying the gold standard of drug trials is a blind, placebo-controlled study.

Pfizer spokeswoman Mariann Caputo said the company had been given the study results, but had not seen all the data or the methodology. She added the WellPoint report did not change the preponderance of peer-reviewed, scientific studies that support Celebrex's safety.

Pfizer has previously said that a review of its internal studies did not show that either Celebrex or Bextra increased patients' risk for cardiovascular problems.

Casino bids for one-day name

BOSTON — A bidder identified as "Golden Palace Casino" has offered the high bid for single-day naming rights for the FleetCenter, putting up \$35,099.

"Golden Palace Casino," which is the name of an online casino, beat the nearest bidder on eBay by \$100 in the first auction to name the sports arena for a day.

If the name choice is approved by the FleetCenter owners, Delaware North Cos., it will appear on the Jumbotron during Wednesday's game between the Boston Celtics and Memphis Grizzlies.

The rotating, day-to-day opportunity is being offered through the eBay auction while Delaware North seeks a long-term naming rights deal to replace the FleetCenter name. The name was rendered obsolete by Bank of America's \$48 billion acquisition last year of the former FleetBoston Financial Corp.

Mom found incompetent

McKINNEY, Texas — A woman accused of killing her 10-month-old daughter by cutting off her arms was ruled mentally incompetent to stand trial on capital murder charges.

Attorneys said they expect the judge to commit DNA Schlosser to a state hospital on Tuesday. She could still stand trial if she is someday found competent.

Schlosser, 36, was charged with murder Nov. 22 after she told a 911 operator she had severed her 10-month-old daughter's arms.

FDA to establish drug board

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration will establish a new independent Drug Safety Oversight Board to monitor FDA-approved medicines once they're on the market and update physicians and patients with emerging information on risks and benefits.

The board will recommend what information and updates to put on the government's Drug Watch, resolve disputes over drug safety issues and oversee the development of a drug safety policy.

Keyes' lesbian child speaks out

ANNAPOLIS — The daughter of conservative Republican Alan Keyes referred to herself Monday as a "liberal queer" and urged support for gay and lesbian young people who have been deserted by their families.

Maya Marcel-Keyes, 19, addressed a rally sponsored by the gay-rights group Equality Maryland, saying she was motivated to speak out because of her rocky relationship with her parents and the recent death of a friend who had fallen ill after being thrown out of the house by his family.

Her father, the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in Illinois last year, created a stir in August when he said during an interview that homosexuality was "a selfish, hedonistic" and that Vice President Dick Cheney's lesbian daughter was a sinner.

From The Associated Press



Michael Jackson's bodyguards stand watch Tuesday in front of the emergency room entrance to Marian Medical Center in Santa Maria, Calif. Jackson was on his way to court for his child molestation trial when he was taken to the hospital instead for an undisclosed medical emergency.

AP

Jackson taken to hospital; trial delayed

BY TIM MOLLOY

The Associated Press

SANTA MARIA, Calif. — Michael Jackson was taken to a hospital Tuesday and was to be admitted, the judge in the singer's molestation trial said. The development delayed jury selection.

Judge Rodney Melville told prospective jurors that Jackson was on his way to court when he was taken to the hospital emergency room instead. He later told them Jackson was to be admitted.

But Melville did not give any details about the illness and said he was awaiting word on Jackson's condition before deciding whether jury selection would resume.

The judge made the announcement 15 minutes after Jackson was scheduled to

appear in court at 8:30 a.m. A call to the Marian Medical Center in Santa Maria, where Jackson was taken, was not immediately returned.

On Monday, questioning of jurors got under way, and Jackson's lawyers announced they may call Elizabeth Taylor, Jay Leno, Quincy Jones and Kobe Bryant to the witness stand.

The list of possible witnesses sounded like coming attractions for a major Hollywood spectacle. But Melville dimmed that prospect, saying not all of the celebrities would necessarily testify.

Attorneys are in the process of selecting 12 jurors and eight alternates who will decide whether Jackson molested a teenage cancer patient at his Neverland Ranch and plied the youth with alcohol.

Names of defense and prosecution witnesses were revealed to prospective jurors Monday so attorneys could find out if any of the more than 240 members of the pool had associations that may be important in jury selection.

Defense attorney Thomas Mesereau Jr. also named two of Jackson's children, Paris and Prince Michael.

Possible prosecution witnesses included Debbie Rowe, the mother. Other possible witnesses included Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Chris Tucker, former child actor Corey Feldman, Backstreet Boy Nick Carter and younger brother Aaron, CBS correspondent Ed Bradley, CNN's Larry King, Fox broadcaster Rita Cosby, New Age guru Deepak Chopra, psychic Uri Geller, illusionist David Blaine, Las Vegas tycoon Steve Wynn and relatives of the late Marlon Brando.

Activists face new battle in potential HIV strain

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — With the possibility of a new drug-resistant strain of HIV spreading among gay men, AIDS activists and prevention workers who first fought the disease 25 years ago say they are facing a new battle.

Last week, a New York man was diagnosed with what is feared to be a new strain of the virus. He has told health officials that he has had unprotected sex with numerous partners while using the drug crystal methamphetamine, prompting a fear that the virus has spread.

While officials are testing two other men in an attempt to find the source of the virus, AIDS activists want to focus on how to combat the spread of the potential strain.

"It makes a community stronger when we take care of ourselves," Ana Oliveira, executive director of the Gay Men's Health Crisis told The New York Times in Tuesday editions. "And if that means that we have to be much more present and intervene with people who are doing this to themselves, then so be it."

Activists say they have discussed taking

actions ranging from infiltration of Web sites where unsafe gay sex liaisons involving crystal meth are set up to confronting participants of sex parties.

But others want to be careful of how far prevention methods go. "We don't want public health vigilantes going out and taking matters into their own hands, particularly if it means breaching the confidentiality and civil rights of people with HIV," said Jon Givner, who directs the HIV Project at the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. "Frankly, I find it pretty scary."

Popular dogs in Westminster doghouse

BY BEN WALKER

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Trudy looked like such a sweet Dalmatian. A black spot over her left eye, she gobbled down a pretzel treat and wagged her tail when a little girl in a Valentine's Day outfit came up to pet her.

Only moments later Monday at the Westminster Kennel Club show, she lost it. Because when a respected judge tried to open her mouth for a closer look, Trudy growled.

"She misbehaved," owner-handler Janice Brennan said. "She was a bad thing."

Then again, maybe Trudy knew what was in store. For when it comes to the most popular breeds in the United States, almost all of them are in the Westminster doghouse.

Dalmatians, Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, beagles, Dachshunds — none of them have ever taken the best in show title at America's most prestigious pooch event.

Instead, it's those terriers — wire fox terriers, smooth fox terriers, Kerry blue terriers, Scottish terriers and Norwich terriers. Overall, they've won 43 of 96 times.



Long-coat Chihuahua I Believe I Can Fly is presented by his handler during competition at the 129th Westminster Kennel Club dog show Monday in New York.

"They're just such showy dogs," said Jackie Thatcher, who brought her wire fox from Texas to the green carpet of Madison Square Garden. "They just say, 'Look at me!'"

With former Olympic diving champion Greg Louganis, actress Glenn Close and the first sellout crowd in Westminster history on hand, a spirited Norfolk terrier named Coco ruled Monday night. After taking off six months to have three puppies — Tom, Dick and Harry — she returned at 6½ years old to win the terrier group for the second straight year.

"This is her last dog show," handler Beth Sweigart said. A wobbling Pekingese called Jeffrey took the tough toy group, beating out a pert Pomeranian co-owned by comedian Bill Cosby and a fancy-cut toy poodle that was the No. 1 show dog in the United States. Coleman the poodle was born in Japan and yes, he responds to commands in both languages.

In an upset, a Great Pyrenees called Fame became the first dog of its breed to take the working group. The victory certainly surprised breeder Karen Justin — she didn't even buy tickets in advance for the night dog.

A Tibetan terrier became the first of its breed to win the non-sporting group.

The sporting, hound and herding groups were to be judged Tuesday night, with the coveted sterling silver bowl presented to the best in show shortly before 11 p.m.



Frederick Booker Noe III, right, a seventh-generation member of the Beam family and "bourbon ambassador" for Jim Beam Distillery Worldwide Inc., helps seal the 10 millionth barrel of bourbon along with Thomas J. Flocco, left, president and CEO of Jim Beam Brands, at the Jim Beam Distillery in Clermont, Ky., on Monday.

Jim Beam celebrates 10 millionth barrel

The Associated Press

CLERMONT, Ky. — With a few swings of a long mallet, Jim Beam's great-grandson sealed a white oak barrel Monday that represented the brand's 10 millionth barrel of bourbon since the end of Prohibition.

But anyone wanting a sip will have to wait. The special barrel, enough for hundreds of bottles, was taken to a warehouse so the bourbon can age at least four years to develop its distinctive color and taste.

"We're going to put this baby away to age a few years and then we'll pull it out and see what it tastes like," Beam descendant Fred Noe told a crowd gathered under a tent outside the Jim Beam distillery here.

It marked another milestone for the whiskey-making Beam family, which sold its first batch in Kentucky in 1795 when family patriarch Jacob Beam set up a still not far from here.

"The Beam family has been making whiskey since a different George was president," said Jim Beam Brands Worldwide Inc. president and CEO Tom Flocco, who wielded another mallet to seal the commemorative barrel.

The morning event was too early for a toast, even in the heart of bourbon country, but guests were presented special bottles of Jim Beam bourbon to mark the occasion.

The 10 million barrels of bourbon produced since the repeal of Prohibition equal 3.25 billion bottles, enough for 73 billion drinks. For a spirit to be called bourbon, it must be made from a mash mixture of at least 51 percent corn and aged a minimum of two years in a new, charred oak container.

Jim Beam fills, on average, 700 barrels of bourbon a day.

Flocco said reaching the milestone was a testament to generations of Beam workers.

9-year-old boy, family get good news: 'Frank' the tumor is dead

BY KRISTEN GELINEAU

The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — A 9-year-old boy who nicknamed his tumor "Frank" and whose mother launched an online auction to help pay for his medical bills is now cancer-free, his mother said Tuesday.

"Frank is dead!" an elated Tiffini Dingham-Grover said by telephone from her Sterling home as the family prepared to head to a press conference in Washington, D.C.

David Dingham-Grover had a biopsy Feb. 2 at the Skull Base Institute at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. The family did not learn the results of the biopsy until midnight Monday. The family was crowded around the phone on "pins and needles" waiting for the call from David's surgeon, Dingham-Grover said.

"[David] is so mellow — he's so easygoing. He was just like, 'Really? Great! Cool!'" Dingham-Grover said of her son's reaction to the good news. "It's like, 'Honey, is that all?' He says, 'Did you ever think I wouldn't be gone?'"

David was diagnosed in May 2003 with a grapefruit-sized malignant tumor called a rhabdomyosarcoma. The size and location of the tumor — most are in the limbs — made it impossible for doctors to remove, his mother said.

Chemotherapy shrank it to the size of an apricot, but David needed a specialized biopsy to determine

whether the tumor was still cancerous.

Initially, David's mother was told doctors would be required to actually remove David's face to get to the tumor. The very thought set his mother off on a search for a less extreme biopsy method.

She eventually discovered specialists at Cedars-Sinai could get to the tumor by going through David's nose.

To help pay for the pricey procedure, David's mother auctioned off a bumper sticker on eBay that read "Frank Must Die."

Donations poured in from across the world and, after hearing about the family's financial struggle, the surgeon offered to perform the biopsy for free.

David's mother said she took away something positive from the ordeal.

"I used to be very pessimistic about people in general," Dingham-Grover said. "I realized there are people out there that really do care that I don't even know."

David named his tumor after Frankenstein, who scared him until he dressed up as the monster for Halloween.

The boy was in good spirits Tuesday morning and could be heard giggling as his mother tickled him.

"It's been such a tremendous experience," Tiffini Dingham-Grover said. "And believe it or not, I'm glad I experienced it, because I have been given a wonderful gift — and that's to realize how precious being a mother is."

"It's been such a tremendous experience. And believe it or not, I'm glad I experienced it, because I have been given a wonderful gift — and that's to realize how precious being a mother is."

Tiffini Dingham-Grover
mother

Teddy bear flap could become case study

The Associated Press

MONTPELIER, Vt. — W. Michael Hoffman says he might use the controversy generated by the Vermont Teddy Bear Co.'s straitjacketed "Crazy For You" bear as a case study in one of his graduate seminars on business ethics.

"Even though it has that kind of cutesy flavor, it brings up issues about corporate behavior and

how corporations should be sensitive and interact with society," said the director of the Center for Business Ethics at Bentley College in Waltham, Mass.

The decision to market the bear, and to keep doing so even in the face of widespread criticism that its straitjacket and "commitment report" made it insensitive toward people with mental illness, has put the Shelburne-based company under the

spotlight among business executives and public relations enthusiasts around the country.

Among the question he would ask students: "Hoffman said, would be, 'Does the company need to be more sensitive?' ... Does the fact that the bear sold out mean you were right to put it on the market?"

The company began advertising the "Crazy For You" bear in early January.

OPINION

Talks with Iran, N. Korea better than isolation

Los Angeles Times

The bellicose proclamations ricocheting from the United States to Iran and North Korea threaten to drown out common sense. The bottom line is that the United States should proceed at top speed to see what it will take to stop Iran and North Korea from developing nuclear weapons. Hard-liners thunder against "bribery" or "appeasement."

But negotiations are better called "diplomacy" or "compromise."

The alternative of waiting for a regime change, let alone two, is unacceptable; there's no indication of that any time soon.

It has been clear for nearly two years that the United States invaded the only member of the three-nation "axis of evil" that did not have nuclear weapons or an active program to develop them.

While the United States has been tied down in Iraq, Iran is thought to have been making progress in developing nuclear weapons and North Korea to have been adding to the one or two it is believed to possess.

Last week, Pyongyang claimed for the first time it had the weapons; it also refused to resume six-party negotiations with the United States, Russia, South Korea, Japan and China. Pyongyang said it needs the weapons to defend against "the Bush administration's ever more undisguised policy to isolate and stifle" North Korea.

Actually, the administration had been relatively restrained in recent weeks in its references to North Korea, except when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described it during her confirmation hearings as one of six "outposts of tyranny" — a remark cited by Pyongyang. Iran has faced tougher rhetoric from Bush and Rice. During her recent tour of Europe, Rice castigated the "unselected few" running Iran for their terrible record on human rights. Iranian President Mohammad Khatami responded that the country was united against threats, and any invaders would be buried in "a burning hell."

Much of the verbiage could be mere posturing. The United States has long said it would not invade North Korea; Pyongyang might just be upset that Iran is getting more U.S. attention. Iran could be increasing the volume preparatory to more negotiations with Britain, France and Germany over its nuclear program. Tehran and Pyongyang might be seeking greater rewards for future yielding on weapons.

The way to find out is for the Bush administration to push hard.

It has been too passive with Iran and North Korea. Washington should help the three European nations offer Iran extra trade benefits if it limits its nuclear program to producing energy. The United States should tell North Korea it is ready with money and food if it rejoins the Nuclear



ar Nonproliferation Treaty and readmits nuclear inspectors.

Waiting for North Korea to give up weapons before being rewarded has not worked, and there's no evidence it will. Claiming to support Europe's negotiations with Iran but denouncing the mullahs in Tehran — Bush did both in his State of the Union speech — sends a mixed message and keeps the United States, the nation of most concern to Iran, on the sidelines.

Iran sponsors the terrorist group Hezbollah; North Korea, paranoid and secretive, might be willing to sell arms to whatever nation or group will pay. With nuclear weapons in either country, there are greater odds for a deadly incident, accidental or otherwise, and higher risks of destabilizing the Mideast or East Asia.

There's no good alternative to trying to deal with Tehran and Pyongyang. Both capitals may refuse meaningful negotiations, but Washington must try.

U.S. took right steps to cut terrorists at the knees

BY ROBERT ZELNICK

The scars are too fresh, the mistakes too proud, the human tragedy too deep for anyone to gloat. But with free elections held in Palestinian territory and Iraq, the emergence of Mahmoud Abbas as Palestinian leader, and the whispers of support for democratic reform in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and even plucky little Qatar, one begins to sense that freedom can prevail over terrorism — even in a difficult part of the world.

The task ahead is not easy. In the Middle East, for example, the familiar "final status" issues — borders, settlements, Jerusalem and refugees — will continue to tax the moral courage of statesmen, anger constituents, frustrating allies. Cynical or simplistic wishes will sometimes confound those of a more nuanced tone. The trowel and the plastic bomb, both wielded by extremists, may once again clash as instruments of national destiny.

In Iraq, the terrorists retain the ability to kill at random and in considerable numbers. Conflicting factional interests will require painstaking arbitration. Sunnis must join the government, leaving their Baathist or extreme Wahabii identities at the door.

Still, it is worth noting the similar approach Israel and the United States took in countering terrorist challenges, both acting despite great domestic opposition, little international support and mounting casualties.

The first imperative was to contain the physical threat. To prevent the suicide bomber pandemic from turning every bus ride, discotheque visit or dinner out into a Russian-roulette-type experience,

Ariel Sharon reoccupied areas on the West Bank and Gaza from which Israel had earlier withdrawn. President Bush courageously endorsed this action as well as Israel's refusal to deal with those "compromised by terror."

The United States was slow to build up its forces in Iraq or to provide the right kind of equipment, problems addressed only in recent months. As important, a coherent plan for training Iraqi forces was not in place. Second, the operations of both countries exacted a price on populations supporting the terrorists. Israel established checkpoints throughout the most troublesome areas, inhibiting Palestinian commerce, agriculture and travel. Israeli soldiers arrested thousands of suspects and began building a wall of separation.

They reasoned — rightly — that when

the burden of supporting terrorism became intolerable, most Palestinians would stop supporting it.

From Sadr City in Baghdad to Fallujah, to the Sunni "Triangle of Death," the United States began to apply the same lessons. Resistant populations came to understand that the terrorists deliver neither freedom nor pride, only misery. Intelligence improved dramatically.

Third, Israel, the United States and Iraqi democrats always held out the promise of better times for these choosing conventional politics over the gun. For Palestinians that promise is mobility, autonomy and, eventually, statehood. For Iraq's Sun-

nis it means participation in political life.

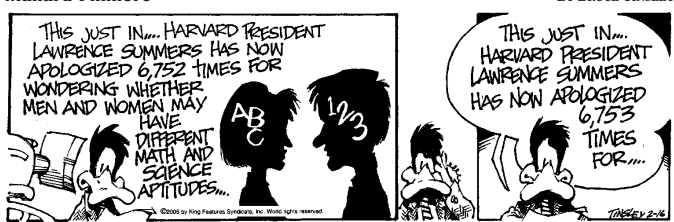
Terrorism is, by definition, a political act. When it fails, its stars lose their luster. On Iraq's election day, Muqtada al-Sadr, the once formidable mullah, was figuratively trampled by followers marching past him to the polls.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi — with his terrorist lieutenants in custody and his name an embarrassment on the Arab street that once cheered him — cursed democracy and its adherents from his hiding place du jour. Nobody seemed to listen.

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, a Stanford-Calif.-based public policy research center, and chairman of the Department of Journalism at Boston University.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Cruel and unusual

VA NEWPORT NEWS — An elementary school teacher faces criminal charges for punishing a 10-year-old boy by forcing him to stand outside in the cold without a coat for 30 minutes.

Jason Matthew Kriner, a 27-year-old teacher at Riverside Elementary School, was arrested last week and charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a misdemeanor that includes abuse or neglect by an adult, police said.

Kriner, a music teacher, disciplined the boy by having him stand outside wearing a short-sleeved shirt without a coat around 3 p.m. on Jan. 28, police said. The temperature outside was around 30 degrees with a 15- to 20-mph wind.

The school system suspended Kriner without pay pending the outcome of the case, Newport News schools spokeswoman Michelle Morgan said.

Bad heroin suspected

CT HARTFORD — Authorities are worried there may be some especially bad heroin on the market in Connecticut.

Three apparent overdose deaths in New Britain have prompted a statewide health alert.

A batch of heroin made several people critically ill in New Jersey two weeks ago, and authorities are concerned there may be a link.

Fire threatens blood

TX HOUSTON — The staff at a Houston blood bank scrambled to save about 6,000 units of stored blood as firefighters battled a four-alarm blaze that gutted the bank warehouse.

About 500 units of blood had to be destroyed after the fire at the Gulf Shores Regional Blood Center.

No one was injured in the Saturday night fire, which was limited to the warehouse. Investigators traced the cause to an electrical problem. The center was to remain closed for cleanup Monday.

The fire alarm sounded as employees were testing the 500 units of blood and evacuating the center, leaving the blood behind.

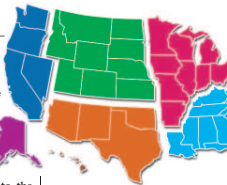
The blood had to be destroyed because it was exposed to temperatures higher than the FDA's. However, the staff was able to rescue about 6,000 units of stored blood, a three-day supply.

Society mulls sale

RI PROVIDENCE — The Rhode Island Historical Society says it may be forced to sell as many as 40 objects from its permanent collection, including a rare Colonial-era desk.

"I hope people realize that nothing less than the survival of the historical society as an institution is at stake here," said executive director Bernard Fishman. "We've made all the staff and budget cuts we can make. Unless we can raise enough money from outside sources, we have no choice but to consider selling parts of the collection."

Likely candidates for sale include a Colonial-era tea table made in Charleston, S.C.; a Massachusetts chest-on-chest donated by a Connecticut collector; and a so-called "lighthouse" clock of uncertain provenance. But the star of the sale would be a black-front desk commissioned by Providence merchant Joseph Brown in the late 18th



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

century that remained in the Brown family until 1944, when it was donated to the historical society.

Pot grower sentenced

HI HONOLULU — A 37-year-old Molokai man has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for growing marijuana on Molokai.

Eugene K. Albino pleaded guilty in December 2003. Federal law does not provide for parole.

Nearly 2,500 marijuana plants ranging in height from six inches to three feet were seized by law enforcement officers from a secluded gulch on Molokai's north side, said U.S. Attorney Edward Kubo.

The marijuana patch was under surveillance when Albino's pickup truck was seen leaving the area in the early morning hours of July 30, 2003, Kubo said.

Don't drink the wrong ale

WI RACINE — Just sipping a brewski gave Isaac Agüero a career hangover.

Agüero, 24, said he was fired from his job with a Miller Brewing distributor, the same day a picture appeared in *The Journal Times* of Racine of him drinking a Bud Light, which is brewed by rival Anheuser-Busch Co.

Agüero, who has been a forklift operator at CJW Inc. for four years, told the newspaper he was



Love is in the air

Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse's "Autumn Lovers" is one of three new acquisitions unveiled at the Fredrick Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Mich.

informed by co-workers when he arrived at work last week that he was in trouble because of the picture. He said he was called into the general manager's office and told he was fired. Agüero said he was not given a reason and claimed he never had problems with his bosses.

Thomas Key, CJW sales manager, said the company consistently reminds its employees that drinking alcohol is entirely a personal decision. The image and reputation of any company is determined in large part by the way its employees are seen to behave. Our employees can and should be our best ambassadors."

Very pricey tea table

NC DURHAM — When Albert Sack buys furniture, he doesn't skimp.

The antiques dealer just spent \$7.5 million on a mahogany tea table — the second-highest price ever paid for a piece of American furniture.

"As long as it is great, there's no price too great for a masterpiece," Sack said of his purchase at a Jan. 22 auction at New York's Sotheby's auction house.

The table is one of four only of its kind made by the noted 18th century craftsman John Goddard of Newport, R.I.

The final hammer price was \$7.5 million. With fees, the total cost was \$8.41 million.

Math, English over arts

NY ALBANY — The state's Board of Regents announced a new policy under which middle schools could drop courses such as music, visual arts and foreign languages to leave more time for English and math.

Barely half of New York's middle school students met the state's math and English standards a year ago.

Town stays sign-savvy

SD WECOTA — The sign said it all: "Wecota, Pop. 19. We're all here, because we're not all there."

That is until earlier this month, when somebody stole the sign that had been bolted to a wooden fence on the west side of the Faulk County village since September.

But Wecota townsfolk are nothing if not clever.

It turns out that part-time Wecota resident Dave Griffith, who came up with the idea for the sign, had ordered two of them — just in case something happened to the first one.

Resident Jerry Barondeau said the second sign will go up, and this time, it will be welded into place.

Griffith paid for the signs, as well as the town's first street signs — one for each of Wecota's two streets.

Second seat-belt bill

SC COLUMBIA — Gov. Mark Sanford says a seat belt bill that recently passed the Senate doesn't go far enough to encourage people to buckle up.

Currently, adult drivers not wearing belts can be cited only if they're stopped for another offense or if children in the car aren't properly restrained.

The new bill gives police authority to stop adult drivers caught without wearing a seat belt.



Honey, I'm home

Army Spc. Lucky Berger of Portage, Mich., left, kisses her husband, Douglas, after arriving at the Kalamazoo Army Reserve Armory. Members of the 428th Military Police Company returned from a tour of duty in Iraq.



It's not that cold

Cedarville Fire Fighter Jason Cook free-floats among the blocks of ice collected from a pond during the Miller's Mills (N.Y.) Annual Ice Harvest. Cook was practicing using the fire department's cold water rescue suit.



Graceful performer

Bathed in red stage light, Larissa Diamant performs a Mongolian dance during the Lunar New Year celebration at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash.



Klondike, a 2-year-old Samoyed from San Francisco, is bathed by Michael Provence in the Doggie Day Spa at the Pennsylvania Hotel in New York.

I feel pretty



Los Angeles firefighter Al Hernandez rescues Michael Garcia, 14, from the rain-swollen Los Angeles River. Garcia slipped on gravel beside the river and slid 30 feet down the wall of the concrete-lined river channel.

All in a day's work



Extra ketchup, please

Dan Braatz, general manager of Culver's restaurant, shows off an 8.75-inch crinkle-cut fry in Pewaukee, Wis.

File suit, lose business

MI FLINT — Mayor Don Williams is taking a novel tack in fighting lawsuits — he's withholding city business from anyone who has sued Flint within the past five years.

Williams said the Jan. 21 policy is in the taxpayers' best interests. In recent years, the city faced a multimillion-dollar deficit that prompted the state to declare a financial emergency.

"Who in the world would want to do business if you're sued by 'em?" Williams said.

But Greg Gibbs, chairman of the Greater Flint branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, said he would go to federal court to have the policy declared unconstitutional. "That's just a reckless, retaliatory action [against] people who exercise their rights to go to court," Gibbs said. "It's reactionary."

Mine safety enhanced

VA RICHMOND — Six months ago, a half-ton boulder loosened by a strip mining operation tumbled 650 feet down a hill, crushed through a house and crushed 3-year-old Jeremy Kyle Davidson as he slept in his bed.

Last week, his family looked on as Gov. Mark R. Warner signed tougher mine-safety legislation inspired by Jeremy's death.

The bill requires mining companies to develop plans to protect people in any area that may be affected by falling, sliding or other uncontrolled movement of mined material. The measure also increases the maximum civil penalty for violations resulting in injury or death from \$5,000 to \$70,000.

The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy found A&G Coal Corp. "demonstrated gross negligence" and fined the company \$15,000 for various violations.

Seminary president let go

NJ NEW BRUNSWICK — The New Brunswick Theological Seminary has ousted its president and reprimanded him for officiating at his gay daughter's wedding.

The school's board of trustees said the Rev. Norman Kansfield, 64, performed the ceremony in Massachusetts.

"We decided that the president had put the seminary in an awkward position by performing that ceremony without giving us the benefit of offering sufficient counsel," board member Rev. Larry Williams, Sr., told The Star-Ledger of Newark.

In a letter sent shortly before the June 19 wedding of his daughter, Anne, Kansfield informed the board of his decision to officiate and said he wasn't seeking its permission. The board voted Jan. 28 not to renew Kansfield's contract.

Shooting death questions

CA MISSION VIEJO — Friends and family of a 20-year-old man who was fatally shot by an off-duty U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer last week are angry that police have not arrested or charged the shooter.

Douglas Bates, who checks passports at Los Angeles International Airport, fired one shot at Bassim Chmait on Feb. 5 after he encountered a group of young men.

Police say they have no grounds to arrest Bates.

Free Guard tax service

SD PIERRE — Staffers in the state auditor's office are volunteering to help prepare federal income tax returns for members of the National Guard still on duty or who've just returned from active duty overseas.

Auditor Ron Sattgast said he decided to offer the help because preparing taxes was the last thing he wanted to do when he returned in April 2002 from active duty.

Love has no boundaries

PA VOLANT — Archie Glenn's family made sure he was Deere-ly departed.

The 99-year-old dairy farmer had a passion for John Deere tractors. So at his Feb. 4 funeral, his family had his casket pulled to the North Plain Grove Cemetery using a 1950s vintage John Deere tractor.

"He loved those machines," said Glenn's daughter, Ruth Wigton.

"They never let him down," Glenn bought his first John Deere tractor in 1935. When he retired in 1977 at age 72, he continued to use a tractor to mow 20 of his own acres and his neighbors' land.

Murder suspect charged

NC DURHAM — Investigators have charged a Virginia man in a triple homicide that had gone unsolved for nearly three decades.

Ronnie Lindbergh Manning, 54, of Virginia Beach, was arrested at his house and charged with three counts of murder in the slayings of Aubrey L. Goss, 63; Walter Dean, 53; and William Wheeler, 37. They were shot to death inside a garage on Oct. 7, 1976, at a house known for gambling and drinking.

Goss sold liquor out of the garage and allowed his customers to hang around drinking and playing cards, police said. Goss' brother found him lying face down with eight shots in the head, chest and stomach and stabbed three times in the back. The two other victims were killed by blows to the head, probably with a hatchet, authorities said.

Church suppers outlawed

IN INDIANAPOLIS — State lawmakers are scrambling to fix a 2001 law that effectively outlawed the traditional pitch-in suppers hosted by churches and civic groups.

The law required "food establishments" to hire certified food handlers. It took full effect in January and was aimed at restaurants.

However, it failed to include an exemption for churches and nonprofits that host community suppers.

Whistleblower cries foul

NV RENO — A whistleblower filed a second federal lawsuit against the University of Nevada, Reno, accusing officials of trying to smear him after he discovered a hidden police camera outside his lab last month.

UNR associate professor Hussein S. Hussein said the school last year, claiming he became the target of reprisals after he notified the U.S. Agricultural Department of alleged animal abuse at UNR barns and holding pens.

UNR officials have denied the claims in the first suit and declined comment on the latest suit.

FACES

'Friends' star Perry home from hospital

"Friends" actor **Matthew Perry**, who has previously been treated for alcohol and prescription drug addiction, is back home after a brief hospital stay due to what his publicist called a bad reaction to prescription medicine.

Perry, 35, was taken to a Los Angeles hospital last week and stayed overnight for doctor-ordered observation, publicist **Lisa Kasterler** said Sunday. She didn't provide details.

Spacey says he fell into director's role

Actor **Kevin Spacey** said he never intended to direct "Beyond the Sea" but put himself in the chair after failing for years to find a director for his biopic on singer **Bobby Darin**.



Spacey

Spacey starred, directed, co-wrote, sang and danced in the movie about his childhood hero, which showed outside the main competition Sunday at the Berlin International Film Festival.

"My original intention was just to play Bobby," he said. "I did not set out to direct this movie, I did not set out to write this movie. I spent a good 3½ years trying to find the right director."

Studios initially were unwilling to finance a film about the comparatively forgotten singer who died in 1973.

When the money finally came, Spacey said, "I just said, 'If it's a case of making the movie and directing it, which is a risk and I know I'll take knocks for it, or not directing this movie, then it's a very easy choice.'"

Fonda talks about struggle with bulimia

Actress **Jane Fonda** shared her struggle with bulimia and quest for physical perfection at a conference of teenage girls here, urging them to realize what it took her some 60 years to understand.

"The reason I've been excited about coming here is because I believe if we're going to solve the problems confronting the world on every level, it's going to have to be the girls who do it," Fonda said.

The keynote speaker for Montana State University's Girls for a Change Conference on Saturday, Fonda told her audience of about 250 that her years of trying to look perfect have taken a great toll on her.

"I was bulimic for 35 years," Fonda said. "I mistook the physical hunger for spiritual hunger."

Take a ride on the Strummer express

Joe Strummer, lead singer of British punk band **The Clash**, has been honored with a train named for him.

Strummer, who died in 2002 at age 50, was remembered at a naming ceremony Saturday at a railway station in Bristol, southwest England.

The Strummer train, a diesel locomotive built in 1963, follows a 200-year tradition of British trains being named after famous people.

Originally born **John Graham Mellor**, Strummer died of a heart attack at his home in Somerset, southwest England, in December 2002.

Aguilera planning to wed industry beau

Christina Aguilera may be getting what a girl wants.

The Grammy-winning singer is engaged to her boyfriend of two years, music executive **Jordan Bratman**. Aguilera's representative, **Meghan Prophet**, said.

Bratman, 26, proposed to the 23-year-old pop diva on Friday night while the two were vacationing at an undisclosed location, Prophet said.

"No wedding plans have been set yet," she said.

Bratman presented Aguilera with a diamond ring designed by jeweler **Stephen Webster**, according to Prophet.

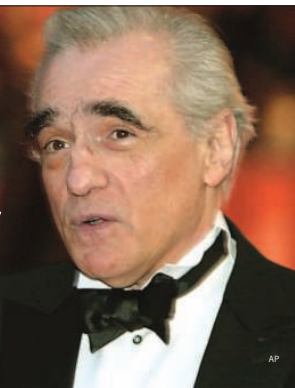
The engagement initially was confirmed to the magazines **People** and **US Weekly**.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



Aguilera

Is this finally Martin's year?



AP

'The Aviator' may finally land Scorsese an Oscar

BY JOE NEUMAIER

New York Daily News

Are they talkin' about him? Are they talkin' about him? Is the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences finally talkin' about giving an award to Martin Scorsese? With the 11 nominations racked up Tuesday by "The Aviator," the man often called America's Greatest Living Filmmaker (With No Oscar) seems poised to win his first statuette, after more than 20 feature films, four Best Director nominations, and single-handedly making New York the toughest character in movies.

"The Aviator" is a clear front-runner, and with wins from the Producers Guild and the Golden Globes, this should be a good time for the director of "Mean Streets" (1973), "Taxi Driver" (1976), "Raging Bull" (1980), "GoodFellas" (1990), and "Gangs of New York" (2002).

But he wouldn't be Martin Scorsese if he didn't see a dark side.

"I'm always questioning my work. Is it good? Is it not good? I really don't know," Scorsese says in his familiar rat-a-tat-tat verbal pattern.

"I can tell you, quite honestly, that I'm very surprised I got most of them made. I think a lot of it had to do with the power of Robert De Niro in the 1970s and Leonardo DiCaprio now....

"I don't know if there's any more room for me in big-budget Hollywood."

Four decades after he emerged from NYU film school, Scorsese, 62, is still the prototypical New York filmmaker, independent-minded, artistic and scrappy.

Which is why "The Aviator" is being touted as the California parking stub the Academy will finally validate. A sleek biopic about the young Howard Hughes (DiCaprio) who would morph from billionaire playboy/Hollywood producer-director/airplane fanatic into reclusive nut-job — the film has Scorsese's usual affinity for fringe characters, but, like Hughes, it hides its twitchiness inside a polished (dare we say mainstream?) veneer.

"Something in Hughes spelled his own doom," Scorsese says, explaining what drew him to the project, which Di-

Caprio had spearheaded.

Like the other lives he's chronicled, including Jake La Motta in "Raging Bull," Jesus in "The Last Temptation of Christ" (1988) and the Dalai Lama in "Kundun" (1997), Scorsese says it was Hughes' struggles rather than his successes that appealed to him.

"I liked Hughes' obsessions and the agony he put himself through, as well as the way he sort of tested his mettle by putting all the irons in the fire. But he was his own worst enemy."

Scorsese developed his sense of drama back from watching life in his old neighborhood. Yet dating back to "Mean Streets" and "Taxi Driver," some have said his stories can be too violent.

"It's painful, to be honest, that criticism. It's extremely painful," Scorsese says. "I just explore the human condition. Yeah, some of them are violent films — or rather, there's violence in the films — but I just try to depict [things] as I saw them, or see them."

Despite his movies' toughness, in the last decade he's become a recognizable pop culture personality, like Alfred Hitchcock was in the 1950s and '60s. He remained through a documentary ("A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies") and parodied his perfectionist image in an American Express TV ad.

He says that New York and its energy still inspires him, as does his need to understand himself through film.

"The traffic jams, the rain and steam on the streets, the figures going by — visually, New York is so rich," he says. "I wish I had a camera every second I'm in the car! What I'd make, I have no idea — probably the same films I always make! Obsessively, I just make the same damn movie. What can I say?"

"I guess I have an urge to want to express myself in moving images," he continues. "I think that I'm trying to find out more about myself, and trying to become more comfortable with myself as a person. I guess I'm just going back to make peace with all these spirits, all these issues, about my parents and my family and where I grew up and who I grew up with."

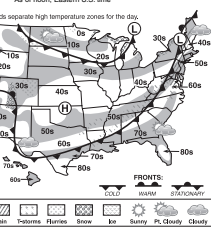
Always the bridesmaid ...

Not only has Martin Scorsese never won an Oscar, none of his now-classic films was named Best Picture. Here's what happened:

Year	Scorsese	Winner
1973	"Mean Streets" wasn't nominated.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> George Roy Hill for "The Sting," also won Best Picture.
1976	"Taxi Driver" was nominated for Best Picture.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "Rocky," which also won the Best Director nod for John G. Avildsen.
1980	Best Director and Best Picture nominations for "Raging Bull."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Redford took home Best Director for "Ordinary People," which also won Best Picture.
1988	Nominated for Best Director for "The Last Temptation of Christ."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best Director and Best Picture went to Barry Levinson's "Rain Man."
1990	"GoodFellas" scored nominations for Best Director and Best Picture.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Costner's "Dances with Wolves" took both prizes.
2002	"Gangs of New York" was nominated for Best Director and Best Picture.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The directing prize went to Roman Polanski for "The Pianist," while "Chicago" was named Best Picture.

Source: New York Daily News

Stars and Stripes



Check our Relocation Guide
every Saturday to find
Realtors at your new station.

STARS AND STRIPES
Your Hometown Newspaper

Horoscope

Mercury energy turns inward as the planet of communication enters Pisces. The transit, which continues until March 4, is like a song playing inside the body, sometimes melancholic, sometimes uplifting and always profound. The next three weeks bring the opportunity to fully connect with our feelings, no longer denying the difficult ones.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (February 16). This is a successful year when you apply your many strengths, including an industrious work ethic, thoughtful planning and realistic scheduling. Seek out outstanding model to be your guide through April. Love heats up now and practically boils over in May. A trip cements romantic commitment. Cancer and Leo are favored. Your lucky numbers are: 19, 40, 3, 28 and 35.

ARIES (March 21-April 19).

You're viewing a large commitment in a different light. You may feel like the commitment is running you and that you are no longer in a position of choice. You always have a choice. Make one today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20).

In your heart, a great, new affection is developing slowly and completely. This building affinity has you humming through the day, even though you may not consciously realize the source of your happy vibration.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

Friends may not come through for you with what they say, but they will come through with something else.

Try not to be exasperated. The new item may be just as helpful — maintain an open mind.

CANCER (June 22-July 22).

The Japanese have an officially recognized condition called *karoshi* — death from stress caused by too much work. You give it all at work, but when was the last time you bent over backward for fun?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).

You have a vision of yourself in an alter-

nate reality of sorts, with a different job or in a new social setting with a different love. The land of could-have-been is intriguing, but don't dwell there.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

There's music under your skin. Be a dancer. Dance vigorously to shake off the cords of embarrassment and the shackles of needing to fit in. You are accepted just as you are.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

The usual routine you engage in to keep from spinning into unknown territory now seems a hollow series of actions without meaning. And the unknown territory doesn't seem so frightening any more. So venture out!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

You handle problems in the moment they are presented. It's so hard to fathom people who can't do this, and you'll find yourself in toe-tapping mode a few times today, thinking, "Right now, please!"

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

Being more conscious and less automatic gives you power. For instance, there are a million benefits to your present situation. Make a list of those perks. Then, you'll realize why you've chosen your current road.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

Honor your need for reflection and self-assessment. Recent events, though they may have seemed inconvenient at the time, have freed you. Liberty is not having to say what you don't mean.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

These can be seen as positive events: Something you thought was true is not. Something you weren't aware of has nonetheless been going on. Something you neglected has grown on its own way.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

The hours slide fast when you're with that amazing person. Your attention is completely wrapped up in him or her — and yes, others are jealous. Make an attempt to spread your attention more evenly tonight.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



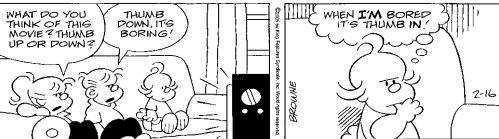
Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



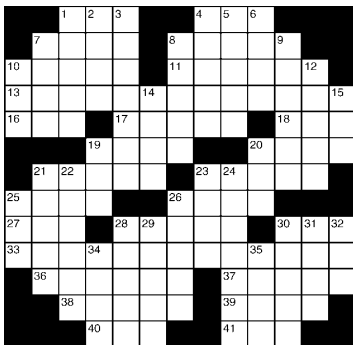
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

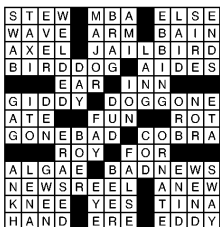
- 1 "See ya!"
- 4 Oohs' mates
- 7 Lanolin source
- 8 Ponder gloomily
- 10 Warble
- 11 Supermarket sections
- 13 Canes
- 16 Photo —
- 17 Senate staffers
- 18 "Go, team!"
- 19 Catch sight of
- 20 Sampras or Seeger
- 21 Bender
- 23 Cole Porter subject
- 25 Do fingerpainting
- 26 Wrestling style
- 27 Right angle
- 28 Dolphins' home
- 30 Shell-game need
- 33 Dismissal
- 36 Scottish port city
- 37 Shatter
- 38 Seckel and Anjou
- 39 Track circuits
- 40 Superlative suffix
- 41 North Sea feeder

Down

- 1 Sixth plague of Egypt
- 2 It's surrounded in albumin
- 3 Oval
- 4 Obey reveille
- 5 Emcees
- 6 One's performances
- 7 Conceal a gift
- 8 Loose-fitting
- 9 Edict
- 10 Seesaw quorum
- 12 Emulate Katarina Witt
- 14 Scuff
- 15 The girl

- 19 Tarzan's creator's monogram
- 20 In favor of
- 21 Dieter's entree
- 22 Come to the curb
- 23 Heart, jocularly
- 24 Friendly
- 25 Morning moisture
- 26 Wise guys?
- 28 Gold-finger?
- 29 Motionless
- 30 Incubator noises
- 31 Historic periods
- 32 Make inquiries
- 34 Elbow
- 35 Stroller

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-16

CRYPTOQUIP

Y QT MDLIQYOVZ IBD TFNI

I QOODJ RDLNFO BDL D

IFJQZ. QVV FIBDLN RQVD

Y O M F T R Q L Y N F O .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: TWO GUYS INVENTED RADIO SIMULTANEOUSLY. I GUESS THEY WERE ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals N

SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Wednesday

AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.-NBA: Sacramento at Chicago (dtd).
Sports, 12:30 p.m.-NBA: Washington at Houston (dtd).
Sports, 4 p.m.-Winter X Games (dtd): Connecticut at Providence (dtd).
College basketball: Not scheduled.

Thursday

AFN-Atlanta and New York 1 a.m.-NBA: Detroit at Philadelphia.
Sports, 1 a.m.-College basketball: Sacramento at North Carolina.
Sports, 3 a.m.-NBA: Golden State at Seattle.
Sports, 9 a.m.-College basketball: Southern Mississippi at Cincinnati (dtd).
AFN-Sports, noon-College basketball: Nebraska at Oklahoma (dtd).
AFN-Sports, 3 p.m.-NBA: Memphis at Boston (dtd).

AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.-Auto racing: Nextel College Bowl at Daytona.
AFN-Sports, 10 p.m.-Golf: Nissan Open, first round (up).

All times are Central European Time (denotes first broadcast). All listings are subject to change. Visit www.myafn.net for more information.

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25

The top 25 teams in the Associated Press men's college basketball poll. The first-place votes in parentheses, records through Feb. 13, total points for first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and last week's rankings.

	Record	Points
1. Illinois (72)	1-0	1,800
2. Kansas	20-7	1,710
3. Kentucky	20-7	1,650
4. North Carolina	20-3	1,570
5. Wake Forest	20-3	1,560
6. Boston College	20-3	1,360
7. Duke	19-7	1,350
8. Oklahoma State	19-7	1,220
9. Michigan State	19-7	1,180
10. Arizona	21-14	1,140
11. North Carolina State	21-14	1,120
12. Louisville	19-7	1,060
13. Duke	21-14	1,060
14. Utah	21-7	827
15. Washington	19-7	827
16. Alabama	19-7	717
17. Wake Forest	21-14	692
18. Connecticut	19-7	660
19. Wisconsin	19-7	640
20. Wisconsin	16-6	340
21. Virginia	19-7	330
22. Cincinnati	17-9	330
23. Maryland	18-6	320
24. Michigan State	19-7	320
25. Kentucky	19-7	320

Others receiving votes: Florida 105; Georgia 105; Old Dominion 46; Mississippi 33; Nevada 26; Texas 26; Duke 26; North Carolina 26; Wichita 21; Vermont 18; Memphis 18; Milwaukee 7; Washington 7; Washington 5; St. Mary's, Cal. 2; Texas A&M 2; Holy Cross 1; Minnesota 1.

USA Today/ESPN Top 25

The top 25 teams in the USA Today-ESPN men's college basketball poll. The first-place votes in parentheses, records through Feb. 13, points based on 25 points for a first-place vote and previous points for a 25th-place vote and previous points.

	Record	Points
1. Illinois (31)	20-3	735
2. Kansas	20-7	735
3. Kentucky	20-7	675
4. North Carolina	20-3	675
5. Wake Forest	20-3	675
6. Boston College	20-3	660
7. Duke	19-7	660
8. Michigan State	19-7	640
9. Michigan State	19-7	640
10. Louisville	19-7	640
11. North Carolina	21-14	640
12. Utah	21-7	365
13. Washington	19-7	365
14. Gonzaga	19-7	365
15. Kentucky	19-7	365
16. Connecticut	19-7	365
17. Wisconsin	19-7	365
18. Wisconsin	16-6	340
19. Virginia	19-7	330
20. Oklahoma	19-7	330
21. Kentucky	19-7	330
22. Cincinnati	17-9	330
23. Maryland	18-6	320
24. Michigan State	19-7	320
25. Kentucky	19-7	320

Others receiving votes: Maryland 48; Texas 48; DePaul 38; Wichita 30; Virginia 30; Georgetown 26; Old Dominion 15; Southern Illinois 15; UAB 12; Notre Dame 12; Mississippi State 7; Nevada 7; Georgia 7; Georgia Tech 6; Georgia Tech 6; Air Force 2; Iowa State 2; Western Michigan 2; Vermont 1.

AP Men's Top 25 schedule

	Tuesday's games
No. 3 Kentucky	at South Carolina
No. 5 Wake Forest	at Miami
No. 18 Connecticut	at Providence
No. 25 Illinois	vs. Bucknell

Wednesday's games

No. 3 Villanova at Penn State

No. 4 North Carolina vs. Rutgers

No. 6 Boston College vs. Rutgers

No. 11 Michigan State vs. Wake Forest

No. 16 Alabama vs. Arkansas

No. 19 Pacific vs. UC Santa Barbara

No. 20 Wisconsin vs. Michigan

No. 21 Oklahoma vs. North Carolina State

No. 22 Maryland at Virginia Tech

No. 23 Charlotte vs. Duke

No. 24 Cincinnati vs. Southern Mississippi

Thursday's games

No. 1 Duke at Virginia Tech

No. 19 Arizona vs. Oregon

No. 12 Louisville at Seton Hall

13 Gonzaga vs. San Diego

No. 25 Villanova at Marquette

Friday's games

No games scheduled

Saturday's games

No. 1 Illinois at Iowa

No. 2 Kansas vs. Wake Forest

No. 3 Kentucky vs. Mississippi State

No. 4 North Carolina vs. Clemson

No. 6 Boston College vs. No. 5 Syracuse

No. 7 Louisville vs. Wake Forest

No. 11 Michigan State at Purdue

No. 12 Louisville vs. San Francisco

No. 14 Utah at Washington State

No. 15 Washington State

No. 16 Alabama vs. South Carolina

No. 17 Georgia Tech at Kansas State

No. 19 Pacific vs. Texas-El Paso

No. 21 Georgia Tech at Kansas State

No. 22 Maryland at Virginia

No. 14 Utah at New Mexico

No. 24 Cincinnati vs. Alabama-Birmingham

Sunday's games

No. 5 Wake Forest vs. No. 1 Duke

No. 19 Arizona vs. Oregon State

No. 12 Louisville vs. San Francisco

No. 17 Pittsburgh at No. 25 Villanova

Monday's games

No. 2 Kansas at No. 21 Oklahoma

No. 14 Utah at New Mexico

No. 18 Connecticut vs. Notre Dame

Monday's men's scores

Albion-Broadus 55, Eastern 37

Catholics 61, Gallaudet 52

12 Louisville 58, St. Mary's, Md. 47

Charleston 74, Wheeling Jesuit 69

12 Louisville 58, St. Mary's, Md. 47

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Ability to contend A.I.'s bone of contention

BY STEPHEN A. SMITH

The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — We have seen this act before in Philadelphia, in which a franchise and its franchise player, touched by adversity too many times, find themselves at opposite ends of the spectrum.

But while trapped by their own championship aspirations, even during an epic tug-of-war between Larry Brown and Allen Iverson, the 76ers never appeared stagnant and flummoxed by their own ineptitude, unsure of what to do or when to do it — plagued by what has undoubtedly become a primary concern now.

Commentary

Specifically, Allen Iverson wants out of Philadelphia. Unless the Sixers get a credible team on the floor. Preferably now! Several sources confirmed Monday that Iverson's agent, Leon Rose, met with Sixers president and general manager Billy King on Friday.

Iverson, although happy with some parts of the team, is far from excited about the roster presently assembled. He isn't happy about being part of a rebuilding project in his ninth season in the league.

"He wants to win now," one source close to Iverson said. "This is not about him being interested in leaving the Sixers or the fans in Philadelphia. He loves it here and loves being here. But the bottom line is that he doesn't want to be here if this team isn't trying to win right now."



Allen Iverson wants the 76ers to put a better team around him or the NBA scoring leader wants out of Philadelphia.

"It's no secret [the Sixers] are mediocre, that he has no secondary offensive option to help him out. And by the looks of things, he isn't about to get any help, either. At some point, you start asking yourself, 'What else can I do?' A.I. has done that. Now he's flat-out asked the Sixers, 'If you can't make this situation any better, after

all I've done, can you please at least do me a favor and get me out of here?'"

King, clearly perturbed when asked about the subject, had little to say. "I talked with Allen extensively, and I'm not about to comment on what was said or what will come of it."

Iverson confirmed that his agent met with King to express unhappiness with the Sixers' current set of circumstances.

Considering that the Sixers are still wondering whether they'll even qualify for the playoffs, Iverson's patience has clearly been exhausted. And who knows how annoyed he'll get once the NBA's Feb. 24 trading deadline comes and goes and the Sixers have done nothing? There were rumors that Keith Van Horn and Joe Smith could have come to Philadelphia weeks ago for "Big Dog" Glenn Robinson and Corliss Williams. In recent days, there was speculation that Latrell Sprewell could end up here for Robinson if the Sixers were willing to part with Willie Green as well, which they were not.

And for those who believe either deal would qualify as a remedy to the Sixers' problems, I'll join Iverson in asking, "What world are you living in?"

The bad thing about this whole fiasco is that the Sixers will be pretty ticked off with Iverson. The good news is that Iverson couldn't care less.

He says he's been upset with coach Jim O'Brien for weeks for O'Brien's private assertion that Iverson could be doing more to help this team win. But Iverson also has

been fuming over the frequent presence of former interim coach Chris Ford at games and practices.

The former three-time scoring champion, one-time league MVP and 2004-05 scoring leader doesn't appreciate seeing Ford, with whom he had numerous run-ins last season, walking around as a member of the organization, its pro-personnel scout.

"I can tell you this," another of Iverson's friends said, "A.I. does not like that man. He felt totally disrespected by [Ford] throughout last season. And for the Sixers to presently have him employed with the organization, allowed to walk around, sitting in suites with Billy King, acting as if nothing ever happened, is extremely insulting to A.I. He talks about it every single day."

This is not good.

It's true that Iverson signed a four-year, \$76 million extension, scheduled to kick in next season. It's true that because of it, he is not going anywhere the Sixers don't want him to go.

But it's also true that he is averaging 29.7 points per game. That he's fresh off a 60-point explosion. That the reason the Sixers are 26-26, and in contention for a division crown, is primarily because of Iverson's presence and penchant for being among the league leaders in steals and assists, just as he is right now.

It's one thing for Iverson to have a problem. It's another thing when he's asking, "What are you going to do about it?"

Especially if you're the Sixers. He's all yours got.

Timberwolves' Kevins find going slow in first game

BY JIM SOUHAN

Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune

Kevin Garnett said it happened in slow motion. You could tell by his wry smile that he knows that sounds funny, that to Minnesota Timberwolves observers this whole season has unfolded like one of those dream-sequence car wrecks where a windshield splinters so gingerly you can count the shards.

The Chicago Bulls led by one with less than a minute to go Sunday afternoon at Target Center, in Kevin McHale's debut as Wolves coach. Garnett missed a shot, grabbed the carom and cocked the ball behind his head for the slam, the kind of signature play that doted his MVP season last year, a play that could win a close game and cleanse a bitter palate.

As fans began to rise in anticipation, Garnett jammed it home ... and watched the ball fly back over his head, as if someone had played a cruel practical joke.

Commentary

Chicago's Kirk Hinrich grabbed the long rebound and drew a foul, and the Wolves had lost to an average team at home on the rare day when Garnett was The Other Kevin, on another day when Garnett's biggest shots bounced crazily away.

"I misjudged it, man," Garnett said. "A lot of times, time slows down for me."

Garnett offered a mirthless laugh. "It's been like that for the last couple of weeks, that I've had that feeling," he said. "I tried to make it stick in there by holding on to the rim, and when I let it go, it just popped right out. That's basically how it's been lately. You think you have it, and as soon as you let it go, it's out of your hands."

They are large hands, thin and scarred by the fingernail fights every basketball player wages,

and a year ago they seemed to control all they touched.

Sunday, Garnett's play was reminiscent of better days. After three quarters he had 23 points, 10 rebounds, three assists, two steals and a blocked shot.

Then came the fourth quarter, and a chance for the Wolves to put a little yellow smiley face on the ugly play that was former coach Flip Saunders' firing. And that was when Garnett misfired.

He went 0-for-6 in the fourth quarter, proving more energetic than effective, leaving him to wearily take the seat in front of his locker for the first time to address Saunders' firing, McHale's intervention and the state of a franchise that now settles for moral victories in close home losses to average teams.

"Superman is not going to walk through that door," Garnett said. "Kevin McHale is not going to throw old '32' back on and come back and help us. We have to take this upon ourselves and try to turn this thing around."

It wasn't so long ago you could call Garnett "Superman" without drawing a funny look, but Superman had Kryptonite, and Garnett appears to have faulty cartilage, although he ducks the subject.

"Next question," he said.

Knee pain might explain his uneven play this season, and stretches where he looks frustrated to the point of depression.

With Latrell Sprewell and Sam Cassell as unpredictable as dot-com stocks, Garnett has found himself increasingly surrounded by suffocating defenses and inconsistent teammates.

Still, when you are the reigning MVP and the face of the franchise, you are expected to fix those kinds of problems.

And yet Garnett sounded insulted by McHale's message, that the Wolves haven't played hard enough often enough.

"Kevin sometimes thinks we don't compete every night, and that's like a smack in the face," Garnett said. "As players, I know

for myself, I go out and play hard every night."

"We're a competitive team ... and we have a lot of pride."

Athletes excel at telling themselves lies of convenience. This is one of them.

These players got their coach fired. We have no reason to question Garnett's commitment, but some teammates should be writing Saunders letters of apology.

Garnett settled for a short phone conversation Saturday. "I called him to see how he was doing," Garnett said. "We just talked."

Someone asked if Garnett could have imagined this — a 25-27 record and a fired coach.

"No, and as a player, you have to look yourself in the mirror and take some responsibility," he said.

When you're Kevin Garnett, you need to take more than "some."

As they slog through this slow-motion season, it's up to two tall, gimpy guys named Kevin to make this right.

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A vision of the future

Sports are the modern world's traveling circus: town to town, day to day, seasons slipping seamlessly one to the next. Some are memorable (baseball last fall, the NFL this winter), others forgettable (the NBA so far) or lost (the NHL).

We are swept up in the trivia, counting down to thousands of seconds, collecting minutiae and memorabilia, flooding the radio, TV and Internet with gazillions of sound bites and computer bytes.

We dissect the scandal du jour, the plays and replays, distilling the people and the games down to their homeopathic essence. We are quick to see mini-trends (the outbursts of player-fan violence) and are prone to fear.

But we are as poor at predicting the immediate future (the Red Sox winning the World Series) as we are at seeing the great changes ahead.

Not many people a century ago would have foreseen the fledgling game of basketball becoming one of the world's most popular sports — or guessed that the tiny sports universe at the time would spread web-like, amateurs enmeshed with professionals, into a multitrillion-dollar enterprise.

Even 50 years ago, not many prognosticators would have envisioned women sports evolving as they have in colleges and in the Olympics, in pro tennis and golf, basketball, soccer and softball.

What do the next decades promise? What might be ahead that would boggle our imaginations now? Do all the data, trends and patterns portend how sports will change?

Steve Wilestein



A sports-minded futurist, Robin Gunston of New Zealand, studies the larger implications of designer drugs, genetic enhancement, terrorism, artificial intelligence, high-tech equipment, corporate influence, religion and politics. He writes in the January-February edition of "The Futurist" magazine of "four possible long-term scenarios" that may play out in the 21st century or beyond:

■ "Religiosity" could develop in a time when major sports replace conventional religion, fans become religious fanatics and holy reverence supersedes hero-worship.

■ "Machosport" is a future where individual sports people become popular idols, fêted wherever they go... as being the ideal of modern man or woman.

Athletes are bigger than their sport in a society that promotes the worst forms of idolatry, and it leads to individuals losing their human rights and respect.

■ "Technosport" develops when winning is everything and ethics counts for nothing."

Large businesses control it all and "only two initiatives in sports eventually remain — soccer and basketball — with most nations having only one team."

■ "Valuesport" will see an end to the big business of organized team sports and events.

This future could be spurred by a horrific terrorist attack in

an Olympics and or a last-minute pullout by television covering the Games.

"Another driver in this scenario is the obesity crisis," Gunston said. Society-wide lack of fitness could lead to government-mandated sports participation in all levels. Advertising linked to sports would be banned. All teams participating in healthy competition will be backed by their community.

Gunston prefers "Valuesport," and he considers cheerful ways to turn everything around now to prevent the onset of one of the other possibilities.

Good luck, Mr. Gunston. Personally, I'm stuck with day-to-day tunnel vision, seeing it all play out with equal dosages of optimism, pessimism and skepticism.

Pitchers and catchers report this week to spring training, and I'd like to think they'll be reporting about the same time in 100 years when there will still be Bud signs on the outfield wall.

I'm confident that scandals will still find their way onto the sports pages, and that athletes will go on being heroes and sleazebags.

Professionalism will survive, amateurism will grow, team and individual sports will keep coexisting, richer than ever. Writers a century from now will look back nostalgically on more innocent days, when ballplayers made only \$20 million a year.

It'll still have our fat arses on it. We'll still have fans and fanatics. And we'll still watch sports come and go through the seasons.

Steve Wilestein is a national sports writer for The Associated Press. Write to him at swilestein@ap.org



In his interview on "60 Minutes," former major league Jose Canseco said steroids "can make an average athlete a super athlete. It can make a super athlete incredible."

AP Photo/HO, CBS

It's tough to scrub off steroids' lasting stain

Bryan Burwell



ST. LOUIS — For far too long, all the protectors of baseball's bogus Summer of Love lined up like dutiful apologists and head-in-the-sand romantics, zealously blocking out any disturbing hint of evil in the game.

Good luck, just maybe, just maybe, just maybe, everything they saw during the 1998 Season That Saved Baseball was a dirty lie.

So it's time they all assail Jose Canseco's character and tell us that

Mark McGwire is pure as the driven snow, which only proves that Big Mac has more friends than his old Bash Brother.

But you know what? I actually understand that kind of loyalty. I understand why they are so protective of McGwire's interests and his legacy. It would mean everything they believed about that so-called baseball rhapsody of '98 was in reality just a lie. For those whose allegiances date to his Oakland Bash Brother days, it is a wise investment to protect McGwire's legacy, since his will always be linked intrinsically to their championship legacies, too.

Blatant self-interest I can understand. Self-serving baloney I surely can appreciate. Even head-in-the-sand romanticism from McGwire sycophants and apologists is something I can at least begrudgingly comprehend.

But this is something I simply do not get: people who want to dismiss the efforts of the steroid cops who want to clean up sports in this country — and the resulting eye-opening "outings" that have followed — with an indifferent shrug of the shoulder.

This "puppet" who cares? Just makes no sense. You should care.

We all should care, because there are kids out there who already have taken note of the incredible, record-setting results of these drug cheats and wonder how they can get a similar edge, while ignoring the obvious health risks.

Everyone got all worked up around Canseco squealing on ex-teammates such as McGwire, Jason Giambi, Ivan Rodriguez, Rafael Palmeiro and Juan Gonzalez. But what really should have

disturbed us all in Canseco's "60 Minutes" interview was this frightening statement: "I don't recommend steroids for everyone, and I don't recommend growth hormones for everyone. But for certain individuals, I truly believe, because I've experimented with it for so many years, that it can make an average athlete a super athlete. It can make a super athlete incredible. Just for everyone."

That should scare anyone who has any concern that impressionable young athletes would listen to Canseco and be willing to take on the risk of getting pinned on one of those mystery crimes or stick one of those super syringes in their hips.

What should scare everyone is the very real threat that thousands of misguided parents are out there trying to live vicariously through their kids and would think nothing of legitimate health risks to their own steroid-using offspring in reward of a college scholarship or a professional contract.

What scares me is that we might already be too late. National surveys estimate that 1 million young people ages 12 to 17 have taken performance-enhancing supplements or drugs.

What scares me is that the race already has been lost. Why are these kids listening to the allure of some magic pill rather than to these more meaningful and haunting words of warning: "I started taking anabolic steroids in 1989 (in college) and never stopped. It was addicting, mentally addicting. Now I'm sick, and I'm scared. Ninety percent of the athletes I know are on the street. We are not born to be 300 pounds or jump 30 feet. But all the time I was taking steroids, I knew they were making me play better...."

"Now look at me. My hair's gone. I wobble when I walk and have to hold on to someone for support, and I have trouble remembering things. My last wish? That no one else ever dies this way."

Those were the words of four-time All-Pro defensive end Lyle Alzado, once considered one of the most fierce defensive linemen in the history of pro football. In 1991, at the age 43, Alzado died of brain cancer, and it was his belief that his cancer was caused by years of steroid abuse.

So how tell me again, do you still think we shouldn't care? Bryan Burwell is a columnist for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

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Report: FBI warned MLB about steroids

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — An FBI agent says federal investigators warned Major League Baseball about 10 years ago that some players were using steroids, but baseball executives failed to act on the information, the Daily News reported.

In Tuesday's editions, the Daily News reported that a special agent in Ann Arbor, Mich., told baseball security chief Kevin Hallinan that Jose Canseco and others were using illegal anabolic steroids.

"I alerted Major League Baseball back in the time when we had a case, that Canseco was a heavy user and that they should be aware of it," Special Agent Greg Stejskal told the Daily News. "I spoke to the people in their security office. Hallinan was one of the people I spoke to."

Stejskal also told the newspaper there wasn't much baseball could do at the time since MLB and the players' union didn't have a steroid testing program or disciplinary actions in place until 2002.

Baseball officials denied they were told of steroid use.

Concessions offer promise, but NHL talks break off

BY IRA PODELL

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — In what could be a last-second breakthrough, both sides of the NHL lockout have given significant ground: The players' association will accept a salary cap, and the league has backed off its demand for a link between revenues and player costs.

Now they just have to figure out the money, and time has all but run out.

Even while the negotiations were going on, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman had planned to announce the cancellation of the season Wednesday, a source close to the negotiations told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Monday.

Bettman was slated to speak Wednesday in New York, but the NHL declined to give details beyond the time and location.

The NHL offered to give in on linkage, a "significant move in the players' direction" the union said early Tuesday following a meeting in Niagara Falls, N.Y.

But when the players offered to accept a cap of \$52 million in return — the first time they cased off their opposition to a ceiling on salaries — the offer was rejected by the NHL. The league insisted on a salary cap that topped out at \$40 million per team.

"It is indeed unfortunate that with the major steps taken by both sides we were unable to build enough momentum to reach an agreement," players' association senior director Ted Saska said.

The NHL had no comment Tuesday on the union's statement.

Union accepts salary cap for first time, but sides are \$12 million apart on ceiling

No new talks were immediately scheduled, but with the philosophical differences now bridged, there appeared to be room for the sides to negotiate dollar figures.

"We probably could've gotten this thing done in the summertime," Chicago forward Matthew Barnaby said. "Am I mad, no? I want to get back to work. But at the same time, I'm just a little disappointed that it went this far to play poker and to have someone call your bluff."

The 24 percent rollback on all existing contracts, originally offered by the union on Dec. 9, as well as more aggressive luxury tax rates and thresholds, were included in the players' counteroffer.

Buffalo Sabres player representative Jay McKee was surprised Tuesday when he heard the union would accept a cap.

"If that's where we were going, I wonder why now," he said.

With the major stumbling blocks now out of the way, the sides are only \$12 million apart on what each team's cap should be. With the salary rollback, only eight of the 30 teams would be above \$40 million.

Until now, Bettman insisted that the 30 teams know what their costs will be each season. The only way, he said, that could be achieved was to tie to the amount of player costs to a percentage of league revenues.

That was a solution the players' association refused.

NHL chief legal officer Bill Daly was the only other person involved in the meeting that wrapped up early Tuesday. The NHL reported that no progress was made, but didn't reveal details of what was discussed.

If a deal is not reached quickly, the NHL would become the first major professional league in North America to lose an entire season because of a labor dispute. The Stanley Cup has been awarded every year since 1919, when a flu epidemic canceled the finals.

But more than two-thirds of the season and the All-Star Game have been lost to a lockout that started Sept. 16.

Bettman said the sides needed to start putting a deal on paper by last weekend if the NHL was going to hold a 28-game regular season and a 16-team playoff. The regular season normally is 82 games.

Even a session with a federal mediator Sunday in Washington couldn't produce an agreement. But it did lead to the breakthrough in talks Monday.

Bettman had said teams needed to have cost certainty to survive and the only way he could guarantee that was with a salary cap. Now that position has changed for the first time since the NHL started gear-up for the lockout in 1998.

The league has said teams lost \$273 million in 2002-03 and \$224 million last sea-

son, and an economic study commissioned by the NHL found that players get 75 percent of league revenues. The union has challenged those figures.

A cap had been an automatic deal-breaker for the union even though it agreed that the financial landscape was flawed. The players' association contended there are many other ways to fix it.

"There is no question the system has to change," said New Jersey Devils President Lou Lescar, who shook part in earlier negotiating sessions. "We just have to keep working to find a solution. It's unfortunate we have to come this."

"If the season does end, we can't stop. We have to continue working at this and get it rectified as soon as we possibly can."

Monday, the 152nd day of the lockout, was to have been the last day of the All-Star break, the festivities in Atlanta were called off months earlier. Through Monday, 824 of the 1,230 regular-season games have been lost.

"Everybody has to take responsibility," Lombardi said.

The sides have traded proposals throughout the lockout, but the salary cap had always been the sticking point. Other issues such as arbitration, revenue-sharing, and rookie caps never reached a negotiating stage because the sides couldn't agree on the big issue.

In recent days, the union and league seemed adamant that they wouldn't budge. "We're done," Saska said Thursday after talks broke off.

On Sunday, Daly said: "We will not be reaching out to them."

Cy Young winner Santana agrees to four-year deal

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Less than two years ago, Johan Santana was in Minnesota's bullpen. Back home in Venezuela this winter, he had bodyguards.

Winning the AL Cy Young Award certainly heightened Santana's profile. It also raised his price.

MLB briefs
Santana and the Twins agreed Monday to a \$40 million, four-year contract. The deal, contingent on Santana passing a physical, marked the end of a whirlwind offseason for the 25-year-old left-hander.

"A lot of things happened to me," Santana said from Fort Myers, Fla., where he is preparing for the start of spring training this weekend. "The good thing about it is they were all positive. As long as it's positive, you are fine. I think I can deal with all of that with no problems."

Santana, who had been scheduled for a salary arbitration hearing Tuesday, led the league with a 2.61 ERA and 265 strikeouts in 2004.

He became the first Venezuelan to win the Cy Young Award and the first unanimous winner in the AL since Pedro Martinez in 2000.

After making \$1.6 million last year, Santana — who would have been eligible for free agency after the 2006 season — had asked for a raise to \$6.8 million and had been offered \$5 million by the team.

Both sides were happy to avoid arbitration.

"Definitely, it's something that we were looking for," Santana said. "It's good to know that I'll be in a Twins uniform for four more years."

Though small-market Minnesota always has a low payroll, its stance has long been to pay the players who produce. After lengthy negotiations between assistant general manager Wayne Krivsky and Peter Greenberg, Santana's agent, the Twins were able to lock up their young lefty for the long term.

"They worked hard on this thing," general manager



Minnesota's Johan Santana, 25, went 20-6 and led the AL with a 2.61 ERA and 265 strikeouts last year.

er Terry Ryan said. "This hasn't just been a week or two. I've got to compliment those two guys to stay with it, because it's certainly a tedious process."

Santana set a Twins record by winning 13 consecutive decisions and didn't lose in 15 starts after the All-Star break, going 13-0 with a 1.21 ERA to help Minnesota win its third straight AL Central title.

Santana finished the season 20-6, one of only three 20-game winners in the majors last season.

Oakland beats RHP Cruz in arbitration

TAMPA, Fla. — Pitcher Juan Cruz lost to the Oakland Athletics in salary arbitration Tuesday and will get \$600,000 instead of the \$860,000 he had requested.

The 26-year-old right-hander, acquired by the A's from Atlanta in the Tim Lincecum trade in December, was 6-2 with a 2.75 ERA in 50 relief outings last season, when he made \$370,000.

Jeter offers support for embattled Giambi

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Derek Jeter is willing to accept Jason Giambi's apology.

Without admitting that he used steroids, Giambi apologized last week to his New York Yankees teammates, fans and the media for distractions he caused.

"We're here to support him," Jeter, the Yankees' captain, said after working out Monday at the team's minor league complex.

"He's obviously in a tough situation. I've been on teams that had guys that have made mistakes in the past. When you're a team, everyone is one family. I'm sure he's going to hear a lot about it over this year. We're going to be there to support him because he's one of us."

"We're going to be there to support him because he's one of us."

Derek Jeter

New York Yankees captain on Jason Giambi

wasted year."

The 2000 AL MVP with Oakland, Giambi's numbers dropped in the second half of the 2003 season to get here and get things rolling."

He was bothered by a parasite and a benign tumor last year, and slumped to a .208 batting average with 12 homers and 40 RBIs.

"It's going to be an interesting spring training for us with Jason and welcoming him back," catcher John Flaherty said. "I think his teammates are all going to be there to support him. We're going to be there for him."

Note: RHP Carl Pavano arrived in Tampa and threw off a bullpen mound Monday.

"It's exciting to get here and get things rolling."

said Pavano, who signed a \$395 million, four-year contract.

"I'm hungry," Jeter said. "Hopefully the everybody is hungry. When you lose, it's a whole



Jeff Garcia played just one year for the Browns after signing a four-year, \$25M contract.

Garcia sacked by Browns

BY TOM WITHERS
The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — From the start, it was apparent that Jeff Garcia was a bad fit for the Cleveland Browns.

He didn't like the offense. He didn't get along with coaches. He didn't jell with teammates.

On Monday, the quarterback was told one reason in Cleveland was enough — for everyone.

Garcia will be released on Feb. 22, set free two days before his 35th birthday and less than a year since the Browns outbid Tampa Bay to sign him to a four-year, \$25 million contract.

The Browns, rebuilding under new coach Romeo Crennel, put a little more distance between themselves and an awful 4-12 season by cutting ties with Garcia.

In starts for Cleveland, Garcia completed 144 of 263 passes for 1,731 yards with 10 touchdowns and nine interceptions. But beginning with his criticism of former coach Butch Davis' offense in August, it was a disastrous season.

"It's unfortunate that neither the Browns nor Jeff had the kind of year they were hoping for," said his agent, Steve Baker. "It was frustrating."

Garcia had a brilliant debut in Cleveland, rallying the Browns to beat Baltimore. But as the losses piled up, Garcia's frustration made it impossible for him to keep quiet. He publicly criticized his teammates and began to openly question why Davis signed him.

Offseason distractions further strained

Garcia's relationship with the Browns and Cleveland fans. Garcia, who ended the season on the injured list, testified in a trial for his girlfriend, a Playboy Playmate, who was accused of karate-kicking one of Garcia's former girlfriends during a fight.

Garcia's release — league rules prevent it from becoming official for another week — is the first move of many expected in a house cleaning by Crennel, the former New England defensive coordinator.

On Sunday, Crennel hired Maurice Carraway as his offensive coordinator and the two didn't waste any time coming to an agreement on their first personnel move, deciding that Garcia was not worth keeping.

While Garcia's release will create about \$2 million under the salary cap, it leaves Kelly Holcomb as the only veteran quarterback on Cleveland's roster. Complicating matters, Holcomb can become a free agent in March.

General manager Phil Savage said the club would like to keep the 31-year-old Holcomb, whose four seasons in Cleveland have been characterized by amazing performances and agonizing injuries.

If the Browns can't re-sign Holcomb, they may pursue a free agent quarterback. The club has the No. 3 overall selection in Cleveland's draft, but it's unlikely Crennel would want to begin his tenure with a rookie QB.

Also on Monday, Crennel hired Jeff Davidson, the assistant offensive line coach and tight ends coach for the New England Patriots last season, as the Browns' offensive line coach.

Sports briefs

The Associated Press
BOSTON — Just another big goal by Bourque in Boston. This one came from the kid.

With his father's retired No. 77 jersey hanging high above the ice, Boston University freshman Chris Bourque scored 14:10 into overtime Monday night to give the Terriers a 3-2 victory over Northeastern in the Beanpot championship.

Bourque, the son of former Boston Bruins great and Hall of Famer Ray Bourque, was named MVP after the Terriers (18-10-2) won their 26th Beanpot title in the 53-year history of the tournament between the city's four NCAA Di-

vision I hockey programs. "He's done that so many times in this building and the [Boston] Garden, and I don't think I can compare," Chris Bourque said of his father, who has yet to miss any of his son's college games. "It's just really cool to see his jersey in the rafters and to score the overtime winner."

Northeastern (12-14-4), seeking its first Beanpot championship since 1988 and only its fifth overall, trailed most of the game, but tied it 2-2 with just more than two minutes left in the third period when Jared Mudryk poked the

puck away from BU goalie John Curry after he had smothered Tim Judy's slap shot.

Bourque scored the game-winner while the teams were skating 4-on-4 after matching penalties. He picked up a loose puck in front and flipped a back-hander over Gibson.

"We really dodged a bullet tonight. For 60 minutes we got outplayed," BU coach Jack Parker said. "Northeastern deserved a better fate."

Bloomberg promises 'shovel in ground' when IOC votes

NEW YORK — Mayor Michael Bloomberg said Monday that there will be "a shovel in the

Fowler to buy Vikings, be first black owner

BY DAVE CAMPBELL
The Associated Press

EDEEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — Reggie Fowler smiled sheepishly when Minnesota Vikings owner Red McCombs dabbed his bald head with a towel.

Though beads of sweat were visible under the hot lights, Fowler does not appear nervous about his pending deal to buy the NFL team.

While he has a low profile and there's little public knowledge about his personal wealth, the Arizona businessman is poised to become the NFL's first black owner.

"We would not be here today if we did not have the ability to complete the deal," Fowler said Monday during a joint news conference with McCombs.

Fowler declined to reveal how much he would pay for the team, but published reports and a rival bidder, Minnesota Timberwolves owner Glen Taylor, put the price at about \$625 million. Taylor had offered about \$600 million, though some of that money was contingent on a new stadium.

A survey of franchise values by Forbes magazine last fall estimated the Vikings' worth at about \$604 million. The Arizona Republic reported Saturday that Fowler's net worth is estimated at more than \$400 million — far less than Taylor's \$1.9 billion.

Fowler's group includes three limited partners whom he declined to identify, other than that they're based on the East Coast.

As the general partner, Fowler is required by NFL rules to put down 30 percent of the cash portion of the purchase — though he could borrow up to \$125 million from the league's credit consortium.

"Mr. McCombs is a very astute businessman," Fowler said. "I don't think we would be sitting here together if we didn't have the ability to come up with that 30 percent."

NFL owners are scheduled to meet in March in Hawaii, so approval could take a while — the timetable estimated by McCombs was anywhere from three to 10 weeks. League rules require 24 of the 32 owners to approve a sale.

The 46-year-old, soft-spoken Fowler owns Spiral Inc. — a diverse Chandler, Ariz.-based company that supplies grocery stores with bags, cups, containers, labels and janitorial supplies. Spiral comprises six divisions with a focus on the real estate, entertainment and banking industries.

Jim Stapleton, a former Detroit Tigers



Reggie Fowler listens to a question during a news conference on Monday, when Minnesota Vikings owner Red McCombs announced the sale of the team to Fowler.

executive, said he will serve on the Vikings' board of directors and help guide the new ownership group through the stadium-seeking process.

"The history and the significance of this is not lost on us," said Stapleton, who also is black. "But whether we were black, white or yellow, our goal would still be to make the Minnesota Vikings a world-class franchise on and off the field."

Asked about becoming the league's first black owner, Fowler said he thought it was "a great thing" — but also not that big a deal.

And McCombs said that issue did not factor in the negotiations.

"He did not discount the price because of that," Fowler said, laughing.

McCombs, who has had the Vikings on the block for nearly three years, will make a huge profit if the league approves the sale.

After paying about \$250 million for the club in 1998, however, McCombs was never able to make progress toward a new stadium to replace the 22-year-old Metrodome.

"The fact of the matter is, it was never going to work," said McCombs, who will continue to oversee daily operations until a sale is finalized.

Fowler sidestepped all stadium questions except to stress the issue's importance.

AP Sports Writer Larry Lage in Detroit contributed to this report.

Younger Bourque scores Beanpot winner in OT for BU

"These are very sophisticated people, and they understand that whether it's this city or the other four cities, there's always going to be a handful of naysayers who will try to stop things," Bloomberg said. "But I think that we will be able to show them that most New Yorkers are behind this project and would love to have the Olympics here."

Bloomberg has long said that if a West Side stadium is not built, the city will have no chance of winning the Olympics. The \$1.6 billion stadium, which also would be the home of the New York Jets, has run into fierce opposition from politicians and neighborhood groups.

ground" to construct an Olympic stadium in New York by the time the International Olympic Committee announces a host for the 2012 Games.

"When I come to Singapore on July 6, there will be a shovel in the ground, could be a symbolic shovel, but nevertheless a shovel — and (it will show) that we are committed and people are behind this," Bloomberg said in a news conference at the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum.

The mayor said opposition to a new stadium on Manhattan's West Side would not deter the IOC from choosing New York over the other finalists, Madrid, London, Paris and Moscow.

Savannah St.'s season of futility ends in familiar way

Tigers second Div. 1 team in 50 years to go winless

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Maybe in a few years, they'll be able to look back on this season and chuckle just a bit.

Not now.

The pain is too real, the scoreboard all too familiar.

The Savannah State Tigers went through an entire season without winning a game, only the second NCAA Division 1 team in the last half-century to reach the gold standard for futility.

"Being out in public, walking around on campus, people make jokes about you because you're not winning," senior Sherard Reddick said. "We're all just struggling emotionally. It's hard to describe."

But this much is clear: The Tigers have no business being in Division 1, a leap they made in a few years ago with hopes of making a name for themselves. Instead, they became a national laughingstock.

ESPN even did live "cut-ins" during its regular programming to provide updates on Savannah State's quest for infamy Monday night.

The Tigers gave their best showing of the season but still lost to Florida A&M 49-44, wrapping up an 0-28 season.

They joined Prairie View in the hall of infamy. The Texas school lost 0-28 in 1991-92 — the only other Division 1 team in the last 50 years to endure a winless season.

"It's unbelievable," Reddick said.

At least the Tigers didn't go down without a fight. They tied it at 41 with 1:57 remaining when Donald Carson — son of former New York Giants linebacker

Harry Carson — hit two free throws.

But Michael Harper put Florida A&M 9-13 ahead for good just 12 seconds later with two foul shots. Mark Williams hit a long three-pointer with 14 seconds remaining to pull Savannah State to 45-44, but Tony Tate clinched it at the free throw line for the Rattlers. He made six straight in the final 24 seconds and led all scorers with 23 points.

Reddick scored 12 points to pace Savannah State, which kept it close despite shooting just 22.6 percent (14-for-62) from the field. Carson was 1-for-15, missing all seven of his attempts outside the arc. Williams made only three of 18. Reddick was about the only bright spot, hitting six of eight shots and grabbing 17 rebounds.

Harry Carson traveled from New Jersey to watch his son's final college game, taking part in ceremonies beforehand to honor the team's three seniors.

"You're not always going to be the best," the former football star said. "You've got to learn to deal with adversity. You've got to learn to deal with disappointment."

Savannah State had a chance to lead at halftime for the first time all season. But Michael Ayodele hit a three-pointer with 8 seconds remaining in the period, putting Florida A&M ahead 28-26.

"Usually by halftime, we're losing by 20 points," said Tony White, a 19-year-old student who was among the crowd of 1,357. "I actually might watch the rest of the game instead of just talking to my friends."

Indeed, the crowd was on its feet in the frantic final seconds.

But in the end, the result was the same — another loss.

The Rattlers were clearly re-

lieved to get out of Savannah with a win. During one of the final timeouts, Darius Glover tried to calm his teammates. "Come on, guys. Relax. Relax."

When Carson shot an airball on a desperation three-pointer that could have forced overtime, Florida A&M coach Mike Gillespie walked in front of the bench and said defiantly, "We won the ... game."

The Tigers won four games last season, but had to forfeit those because of an ineligible player — the son of coach Edward Daniels, no less. This time, they completed an imperfect season without having to rely on forfeits.

Savannah State lost by an average margin of nearly 23 points.

Savannah State has only eight scholarship players — five short of the Division 1 limit and the most striking example of its dubious decision to move from Division II.

The Tigers had modest success in the lower level — former NFL great Shannon Sharpe is an alum — but jumping up has been a major blunder. The school doesn't have enough money to fully fund any of its programs, and no conference stepped forward with an invitation.

So Savannah State plays on as an independent, with scant hope of success.

When it was over, Daniels huddled briefly with four of his players. He told them he was proud of their effort. He reminded them that they've got their whole lives to erase the disappointment of this winless season.

"People remember the last thing you've done," Daniels said.

"They have a chance to win and do something better. Maybe they'll be able to look back and talk in a lighthearted way about this."

Not now.



Savannah State's Mark Williams watches as Florida A&M players walk to the other end of the court for free-throws in the closing minute of Savannah State's 49-44 loss Monday night in Savannah, Ga. Savannah State became just the second NCAA Division I school in a half-century to go through an entire season without a victory, finishing 0-28.

Georgia Tech struggling after Final Four appearance

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Jarrett Jack can't figure it out.

He's still surrounded by nearly all the same teammates, the guys who helped carry Georgia Tech within one victory of a national championship, not to mention a promising freshman class.

Yet, with less than a month to go in the regular season, the Yellow Jackets find themselves perched on the dreaded "bubble" — more concerned with getting into the NCAA tournament than winning it all.

"If you look at last year and this year, I think this team is more talented from top to bottom," said Jack, Georgia Tech's point guard. "We've just got to know what it takes to get over the hump."

The Yellow Jackets (14-8) are clearly one of the country's most disappointing teams, beginning the season ranked No. 3 in the country but now sitting below 500 (5-6) in the powerful Atlantic Coast Conference.

While ACC rivals Duke, North Carolina and Wake Forest have



Hewitt

lived up to the hype, Georgia Tech has slipped out of the spotlight with six losses in its last nine games.

The latest setback was an ugly 53-51 loss to North Carolina State, a conference backmarker that completed a season sweep of the Yellow Jackets.

"We definitely have the pieces at every position to match up well with any team in the country," Jack said after Sunday night's game. "That's what makes it so frustrating. We have what it takes and we know what it takes to get it done."

A year ago, coach Paul Hewitt guided this team on a magical run through the NCAA tournament. The Yellow Jackets reached the Final Four for the only second time in school history, making it all the way to the championship

game before losing to Connecticut.

Georgia Tech lost only two players of significance from that team, starting guard Marvin Lewis and backup forward Clarence Moore. When compared with the returning back — seniors B.J. Elder, Luke Schenscher, Will Bynum, Isma'il Muhammad and Anthony McHenry, along with Jack, a junior and three-year starter — the Yellow Jackets seemed primed for another long run in the NCAA tournament.

Now, it's no guarantee they'll even make the Final Four, an improbable scenario for a team that was ranked so high in the preseason.

Georgia Tech will likely need to win at least two more games to earn tournament consideration, but the remaining schedule is rather daunting: road games at Wake Forest, Miami and No. 1 Wake Forest, along with a home game against seventh-ranked Duke.

Only surefire victory on the schedule appears to be a home game against Clemson to close the regular season.

"Fourteen wins is not going to get us into the tournament," Hewitt said.

So, what went wrong?

■ Injuries. Elder, the team's most dangerous offensive player, missed nine games because of a lingering hamstring problem. Freshman Jermaine Smith dislocated a kneecap early in the season and just returned to the court in the past week.

■ Turnovers. The Yellow Jackets rank near the bottom of the conference in turnover margin and were especially sloppy with the ball in their last three games, giving up 18 turnovers against both Duke and N.C. State and 24 times in a victory over Clemson.

■ Intangibles. They always say it's tough to stay at the top that get there. Georgia Tech can't sneak up opponents anymore, and it's often difficult for players to ball in the season's end after a surprisingly successful season. Even the most minuscule drop-off can make a major difference in the win-loss record.

But the Yellow Jackets do seem to be lacking the sort of fiery leader who can take the rest of the

team to task for its lackluster play. If anything, these guys seem to like each other a little too much.

In the loss to N.C. State, Hewitt admonished his players to become, well, selfish.

"Coach told us to look at the basket like a little more," Jack said. "We're probably focused on making the extra pass a little too much."

Hewitt won't go into specifics about his team's trouble, saying it would only sound like he's making excuses. Instead, he keeps telling his players that there's still time to turn things around.

"We're all disappointed. There's no question about that," he said. "But we don't really have any choice here. We've got to keep moving forward."

Jack isn't giving up. "I still have faith in my guys," he said. "I'm not going to give up on them until the last game of the season."

If the Yellow Jackets keep playing like this, that last game will come much sooner than anyone would have expected.

Pitt makes Syracuse latest victim on road

The Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Carl Krauser and the Pittsburgh Panthers have Syracuse's number — at least for now.

Krauser hit three three-pointers in the final 7 minutes against No. 9 Syracuse to help the No. 17 Panthers overcome an eight-point deficit in a 68-64 victory Monday night.

"I think it was written that we were supposed to win this game," said Krauser, whose three-pointers from the top of the key gave Pitt a 64-60 lead with 47 seconds left. "We had to come in here and get a win. It was about sticking together. We're going to go a long way and we'll sneak up on some people."

That's not likely anymore. In the past three weeks, the Panthers have beaten the past two national champions on the road, also winning 76-66 at Connecticut.

Suddenly, that shocking home loss to Bucknell in early January and another to Georgetown three days later seem all but forgotten.

"People think because we have a couple of tough losses that we aren't any good anymore," said Chevon Troutman, who scored 16 of his 20 points from the free-throw line, including four in the final minute. "But we've been good for a long time."

In the first meeting of the teams just over two weeks ago, Syracuse raced to a 22-5 lead midway through the first half and seemed poised for a lopsided road victory. Krauser had other



ideas.

Held scoreless for 23 minutes, he scored 19 points in the second half and the Panthers won 76-69.

Pittsburgh (18-4, 8-3 Big East) has won seven of the past nine games against Syracuse (22-4, 9-3), which last season handed the Panthers their first loss in the Petersen Events Center after 40 straight victories.

Gerry McNamara was the hero in that one for the Orange, scoring five points in overtime as Syracuse won 49-46. On Monday, McNamara had the game in his hands again with just over a minute to play and it slipped away. His three-point attempt from the right corner went in and out with Pitt ahead by one point.

"If I make that shot, we're in pretty good shape," said McNamara, who had 16 points and 10 assists but missed 10 three-point attempts. "We shouldn't be losing these games at home. We're supposed to win them. It shouldn't have come down to the end. We should have put them away."

Krauser made sure of that 22 seconds later.

"It was one of those games you just want everything to go right in crunch time," said Krauser, who scored 15 points. "I was real happy that things did go right because we battled back here in the Carrier Dome. Honestly, I didn't even know where I was when I shot the ball."



Pittsburgh's Carl Krauser, left, celebrates after drawing a shooting foul during the second half in Syracuse, N.Y., on Monday. Krauser, who scored 15 points, hit three three-pointers in the final 7 minutes of No. 17 Pittsburgh's 68-64 victory over ninth-ranked Syracuse.

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Pittsburgh won for the sixth time in seven games and completed a season sweep of the Orange, who were coming off their best game of the season, a 90-75 win at No. 25 Villanova on Saturday. The Panthers shut down Hakim Warrick, who was called for three fouls in the first 16 minutes, matched his season-low with 12 points and had a season-low three rebounds. And Josh Pace, who had 21 points against the Wildcats, played 33 minutes, took only two shots and failed to score.

"I let the team down," said Warrick, who was unable to get the crowd or his teammates charged up with one of his resounding dunks.

"The shots just didn't go down for us. We got some good looks those last couple of minutes, but they went in and out. That's the way it goes sometimes."

Pitt's comeback was impressive because it came late in the not-so-friendly confines of the Carrier Dome, where Syracuse has been nearly invincible in the past year. Connecticut broke the Orange's 16-game home winning streak a week ago and Pitt winning it two straight losses.

No. 14 Utah 71, Wyoming 62: At Salt Lake City, Andrew Bogut had 31 points and 15 rebounds and Utah extended its winning streak to 17 games.

Utah (22-3, 10-0 Mountain West) improved to 14-0 at home this season.

Marc Jackson and Richard Chaney each scored 12 points for the Utes, who used a 13-0 run and held Wyoming (14-9, 6-4) scoreless for a 7-minute stretch to pull away midway through the second half.

Jay Stright led the Cowboys with 16 points.

New Mexico's Neale makes most of start vs. Air Force

The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Alfredo Neale scored 18 points and Danny Granger got his 10th double-double of the season in New Mexico's 63-52 victory over Air Force Monday night.

Neale, the Lobos' sixth man most of the season, got to start and made the most of it. He hit eight of 11 shots and sparked an 11-0 run by New Mexico to start the game, scoring on a reverse layup, a three-pointer and an offensive rebound.

Granger, held to four points in the first half, finished with 17 points and 14 rebounds.

New Mexico (18-6, 5-4 Mountain West) used its quickness on defense to force the Falcons into low-percentage shots most of the game. Air Force (15-9, 6-3 MWC) got its first points of the game on a three-pointer by Matt McGray with 13:56 left in the first half.

McGray, who was 5-for-6 on threes, led the Falcons with 17 points.

Dan Nwaelele added 12, but Air Force hit just 19 of 53 shots. The Falcons stayed close by hitting 10 threes.

After the sluggish start, the Falcons steadily chipped away at the Lobos' early lead and got their only tie of the game after New Mexico reserve center Sean Phaler was called for a flagrant foul with 59 seconds left in the first half.

Air Force center Nick Welch got a steal and a layup to get the Falcons within 23-22. As Welch tried to get back up the court, Phaler pushed him into the stands. Welch hit one of the two free throws off the technical, but New Mexico went ahead on a layup by David Chioti just ahead of the first-half buzzer.

The Falcons' shooting troubles resurfaced in the second half, as Air Force scored just four points — baskets by Nwaelele and McGray — in the final 10 minutes of the second half.

Marine at Iwakuni Wins 2004 NFL Challenge



First Sergeant James "Woody" Biggs (right), receives a check from Stars and Stripes employee Yasunori Munoro.

James "Woody" Biggs, 37, of Folsom, Calif., correctly guessed the outcome of 167 out of 254 selected games in the 2004 NFL season, outdistancing 1,936 other entrants for the grand prize of \$1,000 in the NFL Challenge, a season-long contest sponsored by Stars and Stripes, Oconus.com and TeamStore.com.

Play to Win! Look for the 2005 NFL Challenge in August!

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Tech: Red Raiders beat No. 2 for first time in two decades

TECH, FROM BACK PAGE

"We really hung in there," he said.

"Our players did a good job of staying in the game. We came up with some plays that we had to make when we had to make them."

Kansas' goal is still to finish first in the conference. "I think what makes (this loss) hard to absorb is it was right there," Self said. "That's what's frustrating. There's so much at stake when you're talking about the league and NCAAAs, and obviously to lose a game like this is going to be very disheartening."

Texas Tech shot 46 percent from the field (28-61), including 5-for-15 from three-point range. The Jayhawks finished 30-for-74 (40 percent), including 8-for-22 from beyond the arc. Kansas' other defeat was an 83-62 loss at Villanova on Jan. 22.

The Red Raiders entered the Top 25 last week for the first time this season, but they dropped out Monday following a loss at Iowa State on Saturday.

The last time the Red Raiders beat a team ranked No. 2 was in 1985 over Southern Methodist.

No Tech players were made available to the media after the game.

SPORTS



Players accept a salary cap for first time, but talks still break off, Page 28

Texas Tech topples Kansas

Dora's three-pointer lifts Red Raiders over No. 2 Jayhawks in second OT

BY BETSY BLANEY
The Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — No one dislikes the three-point shot more than Texas Tech coach Bob Knight and a few weeks ago he even derided Darryl Dora's ability from that range.

There was no knocking Dora on Monday night after his three with 3.6 seconds remaining in the second overtime gave the Red Raiders an 80-79 victory over No. 2 Kansas.

"He shot a little better tonight, that one time," Knight said of Dora, who entered the game 9-for-23 from beyond the arc. "We must have coached him a little bit better this week."

It was the first loss in the Big 12 this season and just the second overall for the Jayhawks.

A desperation shot by Aaron Miles bounced off the backboard as the buzzer sounded and the fans flooded the court and began to chant "Bobby, Bobby," for Knight, who beat Kansas for the first time in his four seasons at Texas Tech. It improved the Red Raiders' all-time record against Kansas to 2-15.

Keith Langford scored all five points in the second overtime for the Jayhawks (20-2, 10-1), who led 79-74 with 2:50 to go only to see the Red Raiders score the last six points.

The 6-foot-9 Dora, who had missed his first four three-point attempts, got the chance to take the game-winner for the Red Raiders (16-6, 8-3) when Miles was called for traveling with 7.9 seconds left after grabbing the rebound of a missed three-pointer by Jarriss Jackson.

"I thought I got the rebound. Obviously they were trying to foul, I guess the refs

didn't see it," Miles said. "It shouldn't have even come down to that. We had possession, and I turned the ball over. That could have been taken care of if we had taken care of the ball."

Knight thought the five-point lead might have been too much for his team to overcome.

"The one time when I thought the game had gotten away from us was in the second overtime when they went up five points," Knight said. "Until then I thought we were in the game the whole time. The thing looked like it had been taken away from us."

Kansas coach Bill Self took the blame for Dora getting the shot out of a timeout.

"That's my fault," he said. "I didn't tell them to not let him shoot a three-pointer. I just told them to defend him."

Kansas forced the overtime when Langford scored on a drive with 4.1 seconds left to tie it at 69.

The Jayhawks sent the game to a second overtime when Christian Moody tipped in a missed layup by Wayne Simien with 1 second to play to tie it at 74.

"Both teams were fighting their tails off to the end and in overtime, and unfortunately for us they made the last play," Self said.

Martin Zeno led Ross had 21 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists.

Langford led the Jayhawks with 24 points and Simien added 20 points and 13 rebounds.

Kansas finished with a 48-28 rebounding advantage.

Knight praised the tenacity of his players.

Knight praised the tenacity of his players.

SEE TECH ON PAGE 31



Texas Tech coach Bob Knight, right, instructs Ronald Ross on Monday night. The Red Raiders defeated Kansas for the first time during Knight's four years as coach.



Texas Tech's Martin Zeno (3) attempts to score against Kansas' Wayne Simien (23) during the second overtime Monday at the United Spirit Arena in Lubbock, Texas. Texas Tech upset No. 2 Kansas 80-79 in double overtime — just its second win ever in the series.

Stoudemire shows no sign of illness with 42 points in victory over Jazz

Page 26



AL Cy Young winner Santana agrees to four-year, \$40 million deal with Twins

Page 28



Browns cut ties with QB Garcia after only one season

Page 29

Savannah State men end long basketball season at 0-28 Page 30